

世界の目が見た自民党の政治(2)

——小泉政権を検証する——

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再生なるか日本

今年もまた懲りずに同じ過ちが繰り返されようとしている。この愚行にこれまで誰も責任をとった者はいない。

<THE ROAD TO OSAKI VILLAGE skirts Aso Bay beneath hills blanketed with lush forest. Like most of Japan's remote Tsushima Island, the area is breathtakingly beautiful——until the undulating shoreline yields to a hideous construction site directly below the fishing hamlet. Though this area is sparsely inhabited and hardly short of open space, the government is spending millions to carve new lands out of the sea. A concrete sea wall contains a reclamation area the size of five football fields, all backfilled to a level three meters above the hightide line. Soon construction crews will start work on this new patch of real estate, building a day-care center and a gateball field (Japanese croquet) for the elderly. The cost, before overruns: \$5 millions. Osaki's population is 282 and falling.

The story of this pricey oceanfront playground is more than an isolated example of waste. Multiplied thousands of times over, it represents the folly of Japan's pave-and-build approach to economic revival. Since the early 1990s successive LDP administrations have funneled billions to good-ole-boy construction companies and dodgy public corporations. The dubious results: widespread environmental degradation and public debt surpassing even Weimar Germany's in magnitude. By 2005 Japan will owe its creditors \$9 trillions, or roughly twice the country's annual GDP.

Despite this orgy of construction. Tokyo is no closer to economic revival than it was a decade ago.>

「無計画で無用な道路，橋，施設作りで巨額の税金を無駄使い，そして，ぼう大な累積赤字をたれ流し続けて10有余年。経済再生，景気浮揚という美名のもと，愚かにも公共事業を特殊法人，建設業界にまかせてきたが日本再生ははるかなる遠い幻想。変わったものは環境破壊と財政破たんだけ。」

昨年9月12日付のニューズウィーク誌は土建国日本について辛らつに論評している。

日本研究家、アレックス・カー氏も、「建設中毒にかかった日本には建設業者が連日、田舎道を整備している。その風景はマンガ本を見るようだ。」と自著、「犬と鬼」の中で書いている。また、ニューヨークタイムズ東京支局長、ハワード・フレンチは、強い口調で、「日本人は憤慨する力さえ失ってしまったのか。」(週刊文春, 2002, 8, 8)

平成13年4月26日、小泉新政権が誕生する。

「聖域なき構造改革」, 「痛みなくして景気回復なし」, 「自民党をぶっ壊す」, そして第一の目玉公約, 「特殊法人の民営化」。

過去10有余年、今なお続く景気低迷に苦しむ国民は、改革の旗手として、変人小泉純一郎首相の登場に酔いしれて奮い立つ。支持率80%以上。その熱狂ぶり、新首相への期待感の前例のない驚異的な数値を記録し、国民はおしめない賛辞で歓迎した。

<His message of sweeping, drastic reform draws a passionate response from Japanese tired of a decade of economic stagnation. The prime minister's agenda is sweeping: to slash Japan's bridges-to-nowhere public works system, liquidate bad bank loans, privatize the nation's postal savings system and other government-owned agencies, and break up the nation's monopoly industries. Once the old system is torn down, Japan will emerge a more open, more competitive and more global nation. With that message Koizumi has drummed up approval ratings that have topped 80 percent during his brief tenure. (Newsweek, Aug. 1, 2000)>

しかしこの光景にまたニューズウィークは冷静な目で書いている。小泉人気が高いのはなぜか？

<“Koizumi is popular because he hasn't actually done anything.” says Temple University Japan specialist Jeffrey Kingston. (Newsweek, Aug. 1, 2001)

(小泉はまだ、何もしていないから。本当のことはこれから先になってみないとわからない。)>

「小泉改革は成功か。それとも失敗に終わるのか」。海外の著名日本研究家4人の論説を読んできた。それぞれに視点は異なるが全員が、「首相選に勝っても改革に負けるだろう」と結論づけている。その中でも最も辛口、パトリック・スミスの記事の一部を紹介しよう。

<To borrow an old Madison Avenue phrase, what precisely does Koizumi have on offer

—sizzle or steak?

It borders on foolishness, as I see it, to expect the LDP to begin the kind of radical makeover that Japan requires. The party that administered “Japan Inc.” is the wrong tool for the era the Japanese are now struggling to enter. The LDP produces a certain type of political personality: it turns out horse traders, not original thinkers with the courage of their convictions, which is what Japan needs. Given the institutional roadblocks Koizumi now faces within the party, he is likely to bargain away a goodly portion of his agenda in coming months. At some point, we may ask whether his emergence isn’t just another exercise in political repackaging.

The LDP as the agent of change? To me the very phrase seems perverse. Like the communist parties of Eastern Europe, it has too much to lose. Given its electoral dependence on rice farmers who are resistant to change, and its addiction to porkbarreling and “money politics,” the LDP has little incentive to pursue radical reform. Koizumi is certain to do the minimum necessary to avert disaster and the maximum to improve the party’s chances in elections this July.

Japan can change; most Japanese are eager to get going. And the reigning irony is that Junichiro Koizumi’s rise proves these truths. It remains to be proved, however, that he is the leader under whom authentic change can begin. (Newsweek, May 7, 2001) (Smith is a longtime correspondent abroad and the author of “Japan: A Reinterpretation.”)›

国会も予算案もどこへ行く

そんな様々な背景，憶測のうちに，1月21日，新政権の行くえを占う注目の通常国会が開かれた。ところがそれは国民の期待を裏切って史上最悪のスキャンダル国会となった。その低劣な中味と流れのお粗末さにあきれて，6月19日，朝日新聞は社説の見出しで「国会は犯罪者の巣か」，7月7日には，その続編を掲載した。

〈Diet as reputed hotbed

Lawmakers, and especially those in the Liberal Democratic Party, should be ashamed that the Diet, and their party, are regarded as a breeding ground for misdeeds.

In March, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told LDP leaders to consider tougher limits on political donations from companies that win public works contracts. But resistance within his party was so strong that the issue has been kept on the shelf. (The Asahi Shimbun, June 19)›

ところが続編の社説によれば，この前編の社説に対して，「犯罪集団とは何事か，言い過ぎ

だ」と自民党から猛抗議の電話を朝日新聞社は受けたという。しかし、メディアの使命は真実の報道にある。驚きにあらず。驚きは逆に当の自民党の金権腐敗構造だ。1990年以降、汚職で逮捕または在宅起訴された議員は16名のハイペース。その大半が自民党議員またはその出身者である。今国会開期中でもなんと4人の逮捕、辞任、疑惑議員を出している。

この状況によろやく小泉首相も反応したか、政治献金の規制強化案の検討を提示した。ところがこれに全党員が反発、棚上げしてしまった。善悪、自浄意識の全くの欠如、利権だけに群がるあさましい姿マル出した。自民党員のどこに記事への抗議の資格、論拠を見い出せるだろうか。ロイター電（6月22日付）も直面する諸懸案へのグラグラ審議を詳しく伝えている。

〈Koizumi struggles as hopes for true reform fade fast

Key defense bills are stalled, tax reform seems muddled and legislation to open postal services to private competition—a linchpin of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's agenda—is being gutted by his party.

Opposition parties, outraged over allegations that a governing party heavyweight sought to quash a report on a Defense Agency scandal, began boycotting Diet deliberations June 13.

The litany of woes could well erode flagging public support for the once-wildly popular Koizumi, further dimming voters' fading hopes that he can keep his promises of reform.

The legislative agenda has been repeatedly stalled since the Diet opened in January, first by government party scandals and then by a furor over diplomats' mishandling of a dispute with China over North Korean asylum-seekers.

Late last month, the government's top spokesman, Yasuo Fukuda, sparked another brouhaha by suggesting Japan could revise its decades-old ban on nuclear weapons, sparking another furor.

A bill to boost the public's share of the burden for health insurance looks set to pass, but other high-profile legislation is in trouble.

Controversial bills that the government says are needed to improve Japan's ability to defend itself against attack are likely to be one casualty of the political stalemate, analysts said.

Bills to open postal services to private competition will likely pass, but only as a pale shadow of true reform.

Legislation to shield individual's personal data from abuse looks likely to fall by the wayside.

And tax reform is being befuddled by squabbles over whether to give priority to economic stimulus or fiscal prudence. (Linda Sieg for Reuters, June 22, 2001)〉

それでは不毛、スキャンダル国会に続いて8月7日の閣議で了承された来年度予算概算の中味はどうだろうか。ジャパントイムズは（8月17日付）社説で、「小泉首相は財政改革への熱意を失ってしまったようだ。年間の国債発行額3兆円の上限を撤廃しているがこれは改革の後退を意味するものだ。」と主張する。

〈A setback in fiscal reform

Earlier in his administration, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi projected an image of aggressive leadership as he called for “no pain, no gain” structural reform. His bold plans included streamlining the bloated government budget. With the economy struggling to recover, however, he seems to have lost much of his enthusiasm for fiscal reform.

The fiscal 2003 budget guidelines approved by the Cabinet on Aug. 7 reflect the “recovery-first” position of the governing Liberal-Democratic Party.

The Koizumi administration should reaffirm the basic tenet of its economic policy: promoting structural reform to achieve a sustainable recovery. We know that is no easy task. But, as the prime minister has been saying all along, the economy cannot get back on its feet unless its structural ills are addressed. That is why fiscal reform must be pushed. (The Japan Times, Aug. 17, 2002)〉

自民党の金権政治とカネの元凶

日本を今の土建国家に落とし入れた張本人は元首相の田中角栄，と大胆にきめつけているのはニューズウィーク（2001，9，12），一読に価する。

〈Tanaka built the foundation of the LDP political dynasty on massive public spending. His blueprint to “restructure the Japanese archipelago” by linking the hinterland with the booming Tokyo-Osaka corridor dotted the country with new freeways, dams, bullet trains and power plants. The scheme enriched loyal construction companies and (thanks to required kickbacks estimated at 1 to 3 percent of each deal) filled LDP coffers. “Since Tanaka’s time the machine has grown bigger than its operators,” writes Patrick Smith in “Japan: A Reinterpretation.” “It is a Frankenstein.”

At first, the construction complex served Japan by pursuing sensible projects. But that period ended in the late 1980s when Japan’s go-go economy hit meltdown. Panicked, the government adopted a classic Keynesian strategy to revive growth through public works—but with a twist. The revival never came, yet the government pressed on, pouring billions into increasingly unnecessary projects.

The Construction Ministry is busy building in real life: bridges to uninhabited islands,

roads to nowhere honeycombing the mountains, and gigantic overpasses to facilitate access to minute country lanes, so that politicians can gain votes. (Newsweek, Sept. 12, 2001)>

日本研究家、ジェラルド・カーティス コロンビア大学教授は「日本の政治とカネ」についてこう語る。

〈「NGO の影響力高めよ」

日本では、政治資金についての透明性とアカウントビリティ（説明責任）が非常に低いことが、スキャンダルの絶えない原因になっている。

アメリカでは、連邦選挙委員会（FEC）のホームページを見れば、議員がどこからお金を集め、事務所の維持にどれだけかけているか分かる。

政治資金を調べている非政府組織（NGO）が多く、そのホームページには、産業別の献金状況や、議員や政党の支出内容を詳しく分析したデータが掲載されている。政治家が見せたくないものを引き出すことで、NGO が監視役を果たしているのだ。

税金で給与がまかなわれている政策秘書についても疑問がある。日本ではほとんどの法律を作るのは官僚。だから政策秘書も、政策立案より選挙活動のために働いている例が多い。日本の議員に政策秘書が本当に必要なのかと思う。

政治家は抜け穴を作り出すのがうまい。NGO はそれを見つけ、問題点を指摘する。NGO が政治の改革論議に加わることによって、初めて具体的な議論ができ、意味のある改革が実現すると思う。（朝日新聞，2002. 5. 25）>

日本道路公団と抵抗道路族

現在、特殊法人の数は計77法人。ターゲットに入っているのは7法人。中でも一番の目標は日本道路公団の民営化である。これは AFP-Jiji よって書かれたものであるが公団の全貌、抵抗勢力との関係を実によく捉えた報道である。

〈Japan's debt-ridden highways enjoy ride on old guard politics

Decisions to build a network of highways have become so entangled in political deals that they seem to ignore the public interest, analysts say.

Around two-thirds of the population are against constructing new highways, many of which are built in the countryside where usage is low, according to a recent newspaper survey.

However, 240 lawmakers from the three governing parties formed a group in July to promote building more roads.

“Road construction projects are decided essentially under the table among lawmakers, steelmakers and construction companies,” said UBS Warburg’s political analyst Shigenori Okazaki.

Four public corporations, which build and manage expressways, are collectively buried under ¥40 trillion in debt, while 27 of Japan’s 40 toll highways continue to accumulate massive losses and remain chronically under used.

Undaunted, the government still plans to build 2,300 km of highways, which will require ¥20.6 trillion in additional investment.

“Realistically, they will become bad loans and the government will have to use taxpayers’ money to fund roads that essentially nobody uses. That’s why the public is wary about new highway projects,” he said.

Officials decide where to build new expressways based on need assessments, demographic changes and expected gross domestic product, among other “objective indicators,” said a spokesman for Japan Highway, the largest of the four government-supported road-building companies.

But analysts argued bureaucrats use limited data to justify projects that have already got the green light from politicians and contractors.

Support from such people with vested interests keeps highway officials protected despite public disapproval of their huge spending and inefficient management, analysts added.

One notorious example is the \$11 billion Tokyo Bay Aqua Line, the world’s longest undersea road tunnel attached to a bridge that runs above water.

The expressway, which opened in 1997, is only used by about 13,000 motorists a day, fewer than a third of an initial government estimate made to justify the project.

The seven-member special advisory panel is tasked with studying privatization of the four public highway corporations. But staunch opposition from old guard politicians from the governing Liberal-Democratic Party has made its work difficult.

Makoto Koga, senior lawmaker in charge of the party’s road committee, has repeatedly expressed his support for building unfinished highways, regardless of their profitability. (Hiroshi Hiyama for AFP-Jiji)

月刊誌『文芸春秋』7月号，自民党堀内議員と公団民営推進委員会のメンバー，作家猪瀬直樹との「道路公団民営化を語る」というテーマの対談記事，続いて8月号の亀井議員と猪瀬との対決対談「公団を潰せ，潰すな」を一気に読む。両読み物ともこれまで知らなかった疑惑の公団，官僚，政治家の実体と結びつきなど，いくつもの事実が浮きぼりにされ，怒りさえ禁じ

得なかった。「ずさん、いいかげん、許せない。この血税にたかるハイエナ族」が私の読後感である。ニューズウィークもこの問題を重くみて、厳しく迫っている。

〈Today these 163 corporations cost taxpayers nearly \$50 billion a year in subsidies. This out-of-control spending spree threatens to bury Japan in debt.

Koizumi's target is an industrial complex grown so fat, it is dragging down the rest of the Japanese economy. Construction now accounts for about 9 percent of Japan's gross domestic product, compared with about 1 percent in the United States and 5 percent in the European Union. Construction companies now employ 6.6 million Japanese workers, or one out of every 10. They receive 40 percent of the national budget, much of this in contracts to pave riverbeds, armor the coastline against erosion and build what Japanese call "bridges to nowhere." The forces arrayed against Koizumi include more than half a million Japanese construction companies, their 70,000 allies in the construction bureaucracy and pork-barrel politicians who build careers by trading gifts and kickbacks for construction contracts. In short, Koizumi must derail the world's richest gravy train, run by a corrupt triumvirate Japan watcher Gavan McCormack calls "a creation, even a virtual alter ego, of the LDP." (Newsweek. Sept. 12, 2001)〉

計画試算の違いか、「黒い金」がいずこへ流れたか不明だがすでに建設ずみの道路にまつわる赤字の新事実が相次いで明るみに出ている。この8月、1ヵ月間だけで3件に及ぶ。

- (1) 「第2東名、名神両高速道路が2025年度の時点で大幅赤字が必至（毎日新聞8月17日付）。」
- (2) 「日本道路公団が管理運営する一般有料道路の建設に4兆3593億円の税金の投入が発覚（朝日新聞8月14日付）。」
- (3) 「開放の有料道路の約6割の建設費が未済（毎日新聞8月16日付）。」

真紀子と宗男

ブルータスよ、お前もか。笑わせて後で哀しいピエロかな。8月9日、真紀子辞任する。それにしてもなぜその罪をもっと早く、潔く認めなかったのか。脱力感、不信、不快感が残る。「悪事千里を走る」の重みを深くかみしめるべし。

機密費に端を発した真紀子元外相と外務官僚とのバトル。相次ぐ不祥事で外務省内が激しくゆらめく。「その様はプロレスチームの試合を見るよう。」と皮肉るのはワシントンポスト紙。

〈An Undiplomatic Day in Japan

Under Pressure, Foreign Minister Removes Key Envoys

They are supposed to be the most inscrutable of the inscrutable; stonefaced Japanese

bureaucrats whose formal decorum and practiced reserve are matched only by their aversion to controversy.

But Japan's diplomatic corps is looking more like a pro wrestling team, sullied by scandal, publicly suspect, headed by an unpredictable firebrand and so theatrical that it is difficult to tell who is up and who is down.

(By Doug Struck, Washington Post Foreign Service, Aug. 3, 2002)»

対小泉首相，自民党議員との騒動など，ニューズウィーク（2001年11月19日）は真紀子の顔を浮き彫りにした2頁の特集を出した。

〈Tanaka resigns from the Diet

The surprise resignation from the Diet on Aug. 9 of feisty former Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka, one of Japan's few prominent woman legislators, dismayed many and had tongues wagging about the ironic fate of the popular politician. (Los Angeles Times, August 17)»

宗男落つ。永田町の旧体質，権力，腐敗の巢の一角がまたはかなくくずれた。特権意識の過信，時代感覚に欠けていた。いま世界で活躍する NGO（非政府組織）の存在の軽視がそもそもの転落の始まり。おごり，自己陶醉におぼれた真紀子と同罪。

〈Suzuki's Influence

The controversy grew when Suzuki appeared last Wednesday in parliament as an unsworn witness and was grilled about his involvement in a July 1999 auction for the construction project. (By Elaine Leies, Reuters, June 19)»

「眠りをさます蒸気船」2 事件

激震走る！ 相次ぐ外務省の不祥事，怠慢への批判がうずまく時，平成12年5月8日，瀋陽日本領事館亡命事件が突発。「眠りをさます蒸気船，たった四はいで夜も眠れず」。古い言い伝えのように国内は騒乱状態を呈する。

〈Japanese think China telling truth in asylum row

Japanese are upset at Chinese police for stepping into a consulate last week to drag out North Korean asylum seekers, but believe Beijing, not Tokyo, is telling the truth about the incident that has frayed fragile ties.

But the ministry has come under fire anyway after it had to acknowledge some

Chinese accounts of the incident that it had not included in the report.

And new revelations have been reported almost every day this week, further undermining the ministry's credibility. (By George Nishiyama, Reuters, May 17)》

〈China says Japan asylum row demand irrational—paper

A dispute over five North Korean asylum seekers dragged from a Japanese consulate by Chinese police entered its eleventh day on Saturday with no sign of a resolution to a row that has strained fragile Sino-Japanese ties.

Japan and China are locked in a bitter feud over whether or not Chinese guards had permission to seize the five from the Japanese consulate in the northern city of Shenyang on May 8. (By George Nishiyama, Reuters, May 18)》

〈China and Japan continue to wrangle over North Korean family

Chinese diplomats on Wednesday vehemently denied reports that they were on the verge of releasing five North Koreans they detained during a chaotic bid for asylum last week at the Japanese Consulate.

It was the latest salvo in the nasty diplomatic wrangle between Chinese and Japanese authorities over the incident, which took place on May 8. (By Elisabeth Rosenthal, New York Times News Service, May 12, 2002)》

「総領事館事件を変身のチャンスに」コロンビア大学のキャロル・グラック教授は語る。先進7カ国の一員として、年間に難民申請者216人中、たった22人の受け入れ数とは道義的に許容されるはずがない。日本の難民政策は明確化だけでなく柔軟化と公正化が必要だ。地域的政策も同様に重要で、北東、東南アジアでなんらかの相互的政策をまとめることも大事だ。日本も中国も難民条約加盟国として、今回の事件ではこの意識があまり表れていなかったようだ。

ここに日本にとってもうひとつのチャンスがある。ビデオ映像を見た国民が難民への暴力をわずかながらも認識した今、日本も難民政策の手直しに動いて欲しい。また動けるはずだ。大量の移民を歓迎するというよりも21世紀の一員に加わることで自国と世界をより強いものにするために。(ニューズウィーク日本語版, 2002, 6, 6)》

「日本の長期国債の格付けを引き下げ、A2とする。」5月31日、米格付け会社ムーディーズが突然の発表。この格下げに、日本政府はたじろぐばかり。「エイズの国より下」と失言し、後で謝罪するというあきれた非常識大臣もいた。

〈Rating Japan

But by puffing at the rating agencies, the Japanese government is trying to blow a waterfall uphill. It is obvious to everyone—including the credit rating agencies—that Japan cannot go on indefinitely pumping public money into a stagnant economy and amassing ever-larger amounts of debt. Japan's public debt to gross domestic product ratio is now close to 140 percent. Even if Japan can avoid the danger of default, there is a growing risk of credit impairment.

Instead of rubbishing the messenger, the Japanese government should heed the message. (Financial Times, June 13, 2002)〉

〈Japan's credit rating on a par with Cyprus': Moody's

Moody's said the level of government indebtedness "will approach levels unprecedented in the postwar era in the developed world." (The Associated Press, June 8, 2002)〉

押し付けの個人情報保護法と有事関連法案

まさか、やっぱり。防衛庁だけでなくまたも情報公開を求めた人について国の11の機関が32事項の個人情報を秘かに作っていた（毎日新聞8月3日）。その公表もなんと伏せられて2ヵ月も遅れてのこと。なんとも恐ろしいことだ。市民が国の活動を知るための情報公開制度が逆に国が個人の情報を得るための手段に利用されていたのだ。防衛庁リスト問題もこの件もメディアの働きによって明るみに出された。今にしてみれば、個人情報保護法、別名、メディア規制法案が国民の猛反発によって廃案になったことは当然のことながら喜ばしいことである。

別件、押し付けの、有事関連法案も首相自身が後にその不備を認め継続審議となった。主客転倒、このとんでもない2法案の強行成立よりも小泉政権には、特殊法人の民営化という一番大事な仕事があるはずだ。

「個人情報保護法と日本の弱点」と題し、ハワード・フレンチ、ニューヨークタイムズ東京支局長は記している。

「防衛庁の個人情報リスト問題がもし西側民主主義国家で起こっていたら防衛庁担当相の退陣を求める大きな声が国民からおこっていただろう。政府の対応も“遺憾な不祥事”だけでごまかし、ひどいものだった。それどころか小泉政権はメディア規制法案を推進し続けている。これが成立すれば臆病で無気力な日本の報道はさらに弱体化するだろう。競争とグローバル化が進行する世界の中で、いま、日本はうまく対応していけるのかが問われている。情報の自由な流れを妨げたり、批判や公衆監視を逃れたりする国家が将来、法外な代償を払う結末となることは明らかだ。」

今、この国に最も欠けているのは何か。答えは、真の「第四勢力」として正しい役割を果たす報道である。

「しかし、日本のメディアはあまり現状に波風を立てようとしない。では、活気はどれほどあるのだろうか。どれほど精力的に銀行の危機を調査したか。巨額な郵貯の政治的利用、あるいは政治家を土建国家のしもべにしたキックバック（リベート）の問題はどうか。日本国民はメディアが報道しない日本の腐った部分をどれだけ知っているだろうか。この規制法案はスキャンダル報道防止法案と呼ぶに相応しいものである。住民基本台帳ネットワークによる国民総背番号化も、国家による情報の独占にあるのではないだろうか。」（週刊文春、8月8日号）

「功は立てたし、されどうまくいかず。」押しつけやすいとみた2法案は国民に小泉政権の存在意義を示すための、どんづまりのあせりを示す、パフォーマンスだったのか。それとも右傾化を意図したものか。

「信頼」という言葉の重み

(1) 8月某日、森前首相が森派の合同集会でスピーチをした。「政治家はまず国民の“信頼”が大切。国民のために頑張りましょう」。なんとも白々しいこと。この人に「信頼」という言葉は似合わない。

(2) 「国民の信頼を大きく裏切った。全くの言語道断！」、8月29日、福田官房長官はテレビ記者会見で、東京電力の「原子炉事故の記録改ざん下隠し事件」に触れて強くきめつけた。そう言うなら同長官の「憲法上は核が持てる」と平然と口にした例のミス発言はどうか。内外の国民の「信頼」を裏切らなかったのか。言語道断ではなかったのか？

〈Taboo Against Nuclear Arms Is Being Challenged in Japan

In comments that stunned many here, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's top aide told reporters last week that what Japan calls its three non-nuclear principles could soon come under review.

“The principles are just like the Constitution.” Yasuo Fukuda, the chief cabinet secretary, was quoted as saying. “But in the face of calls to amend the Constitution, the amendment of the principles is also likely.” (By Howard W. French, The New York Times, June 9, 2001)〉

〈A-bomb survivors warn of a new Hiroshima

To the alarm of Hiroshima atomic survivors, Junichiro Koizumi's cabinet has indicated that it may reconsider Tokyo's three non-nuclear principles: never to produce, possess or

permit the siting of unclear weapons in Japan.

The cabinet secretary, Yasuo Fukuda, said the policy could be amended if the constitution were revised.

Tokyo has denied that a change is planned, but protesters in Hiroshima said such comments were designed to change the public opinion that nuclear weapons are inherently evil. (By Jonathan Watts, The Guardian, June 6, 2001)»

(3) <Libido Democrat

Don't let Taku Yamazaki's drab gray-suited appearance fool you, warns a woman who claims to be a long-time mistress to the secretary-general of Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party. Saying she is seeking to expose adultery as practiced by Tokyo's power elite, she published a series of diary-style confessions in the magazine Shukan Bunshun, in which she contends that they carried on an affair for 10 years. (By Thomas Crampton in Tokyo, International Herald Tribune)»

誠に読むに耐えない記事なので全文の大半をカットした。

小泉首相はこのヘラルドトリビューン紙による、山崎拓の記事をどう読み、どう判断なさるのか。いつもの「それは私的なこと。職務に無関係」と一蹴出来る問題だろうか。いやしくも幹事長といえば党のトップ・ポジションである。その要職にある山崎拓の行為こそ、大きく「信頼」に傷をつけたことは確かだ。正に倫理犯罪である。しかも9月下旬の内閣改造新役員人事に問題のこの人を留任させたいとのこと。

なにを考えているのだろうか。首相もよく「国民への信頼」という言葉を口にする。しかしこれでは言行不一致、改革のスローガンも、一層色あせてうつろに響く。

(4) 国家公務員の給与と期末手当が引き下げられることにより、その減額は約2.410億円になり、老齢年金の減額も検討中、という。ならば、高額な歳費と諸手当、8,000万円以上の局長級の退職金、そして政治家のそれも減給の対象とされるべきだろう。改革の痛みを国民に求めるならば、ともども小泉内閣も痛みの厳しさを味わうべきである。

今、日本では生活苦のため、自殺者が1990年代より急増しているとの報である。

<Death Trap

Business suicides are epidemic. What can Tokyo do?—

Japan is suffering what amounts to a suicide epidemic.

Each year since 1998, 30,000-plus Japanese have killed themselves, up nearly 60% from the 1980s. Indeed, Japan has the dubious distinction of having the highest per capita

suicide rate among the Group of Seven nations.

Perhaps the fastest way to stem the suicide wave is to get the economy growing again. A return to growth might give Japan's desperate workers hope for the future—and a reason to live. (Business Week, June 3, 2002)›

政権 1 年 5 ヶ月の歩み

政治, 経済, 外交面での社説, 論説はどうであったか。

4月25日で丸1年。構造改革も景気にも一向に目立った実感はなく, 国内外とも不安, 不満, いらだちが噴出し始めている。遅滞する政治手法に海外論調の目は極めて過激, 露骨で厳しく, 批判の度は日毎に増すばかりだ。

インタビューに答えて政権周辺への声に小泉首相はなお自信のほどをのぞかせて語る。

〈Koizumi keeps sails set

Proud and defiant, he insists reform is on course

“I am a prime minister of the sort that never existed before in this country.” Koizumi said in an interview in his office with the International Herald Tribune.

“The LDP is afraid of being done away with,” he explained. “Reluctantly and unhappily, they are obliged to cooperate with me.”

But the charismatic prime minister's approval ratings have tumbled sharply in recent months, from above 80 percent last year into the 30s recently, as the public has come to doubt that he is serious about his restructuring program. Koizumi alluded to that sharp decline in popularity in the interview Wednesday, but his defiant posture indicated he had no plans to resign, as some critics hope. (International Herald Tribune, June 20, 2002)›

日を追って強まる辛口論評。5月から8月までの4ヵ月間のうち4編を選んでみた。

〈Koizumi's shrivelling agenda

The prime minister has a month or so to pass some face-saving bills

The economy may have found its bottom, but support for Junichiro Koizumi continues to slide. The prime minister approval ratings dropped to 38% this week, and the next few months hold out little prospect of a rebound.

When this Diet session is over, however, Koizumi's privatisation goals will remain distant future wishes. He has achieved few of the administrative reforms through which he once hoped to increase his government's clout. And he has done nothing to shrink Japan's pile of bad loans—the biggest barrier to a lasting economic recovery.

This performance is as frustrating to Japan's economic partners as it is to most of its voters. So rather than show up empty handed, Mr Koizumi will head to the G8 summit with a blueprint for tax reform unveiled on May 21st, though not yet approved by the party, to add to his continued assurances that he has the economy in hand. If he is lucky, the prime minister will not draw too much attention at the summit. Then he can go home, shuffle his cabinet, and continue his downward slide. (The Economist, May 25, 2002)»

〈A dashing disappointment

Time to abandon any remaining hope in Junichiro Koizumi

Not so fast. The new shoots of growth are real enough. But without the structural changes to Japan's economy that the prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, came to office in April last year promising to deliver—a clean-up of the banks' bad loans, privatisation, deregulation and administrative reform—those shoots will shrivel and die.

Was it barely more than a year ago that a dashing Mr. Koizumi came to power on a wave of popularity, promising “structural reform without sanctuary”? Since then, reform efforts have run into the sands of LDP resistance (the post office), or they have been met with indifference by the prime minister himself (the banks).

Blame the PM

One of the biggest is whether to cut taxes to spur growth or to raise taxes and cut spending in order to plug the fiscal hole. Every extra year of spending on public works adds to Japan's government debt, already over 130% of GDP.

Yet the party has now become emboldened by Mr. Koizumi's pliability. Unless Mr. Koizumi changes fast, then it is time to write him off, just as the banks bad loans should have been written off long ago. (The Economist, July 13, 2002)»

〈「小泉は政治の征服者より犠牲者になる方が早いかも。」

Grubby fights

Whatever his intentions, it is clear that Mr. Koizumi's actions have so far been insufficient to tackle Japan's deep malaise. He has squandered the political capital he had amassed in a series of grubby and largely inconsequential fights with party members.

Parliament has just savaged his legislative programme. A bill to reform the postal savings system has been reworked to be almost meaningless. Mr. Koizumi has also stepped back from promising a swift lifting of deposit insurance on bank savings, which was seen as a crucial means of injecting market disciplines into the financial sector.

In any event, there remain some worrying cracks in the domestic economy. Consumer

prices fell year on year in June for the 34th month in succession, and the unemployed total has risen for the 15th successive month.

Rather than emerging as the master of events, Mr. Koizumi may soon become their victim. (The Financial Times, August 5, 2002)»

〈「ペラペラしゃべるだけ。日本も世界も待ったが何もおこらなかった。」

Koizumi fails again

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was supposed to have changed things. Instead, in the 15 months since he took office in April last year, he has only managed to erect into a system a decade-old policy of drift. His style of leadership has become so familiar now, it is easy to plot in advance his approach to any particular issue.

Japan and the world have waited, and nothing has happened. Mr. Koizumi promised to restructure public corporations, then produced a plan that did a great deal of reshuffling but precious little restructuring. He promised reform of the gargantuan postal savings system, then watched placidly as legislators ripped apart his bill and produced a meaningless hash. He promised to get tough with the banks, then allowed the system to carry on as before.

In the meantime, unemployment rose again in June, for the 15th consecutive month. Consumer prices, too, fell for the 34th consecutive month, indicating deflation. And the lift the economy got earlier in the year from a weakening yen that sent exports soaring is about to end with a falling US dollar. How long more can Japan afford the uninspiring leadership that Mr. Koizumi and all his predecessors have provided in the past decade? (The Straits' Times, August 10, 2002)»

このころ早くも次期首相後継者、石原慎太郎都知事の話もクローズアップされた。

〈Ishihara's waiting game

Even before Junichiro Koizumi's popularity began to fall early this year, those who doubted his political longevity had started to speak of Mr. Ishihara as a candidate to succeed him as prime minister. In part, that is because Mr. Koizumi's own personalised approach to politics may have paved the way for populists such as Mr. Ishihara, who once sat in parliament for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), only to turn round, denounce the party, and strike out on his own. (The Economist, June 15, 2002)»

日米外交については、カリフォルニア大学のスティーブン・ブォーゲル准教授が「日本は対

米政策ではもっと毅然とした態度をとれ」と事例を挙げて次のように主張している。

〈地球温暖化問題で言えば、昨年6月、小泉首相とブッシュ大統領が初めて行った首脳会談がそうだ。出発の時は威勢がよかった小泉だが、実際の会談では意外と腰砕けだった。鉄鋼問題でも、日本はなかなか報復関税を発動しようとはしなかった。なぜ日本はアメリカにこんなに従属的になってしまうのか。

「もっと“ノー”と言うべきだ。アメリカが貿易制度の根幹を揺るがしたり、温暖化防止の努力に水を差したり、軍拡競争を抑止する枠組みを壊すのを日本が黙認すれば、それはアメリカのためにならない。」と強調する。

「また、日本は市場開放をもっと進め、環境保護のため大きな貢献をし、不況下でも対外援助を増やすことで、他の国の手本となるよう努めるべきだ。」(ニューズウィーク, 2002, 7, 17)〉

明暗分ける未来への3つの道

小泉内閣の落日の日、さい果ての世界は明か暗か。

ニューズウィークは新政権の発足直後、早々にその命運を占う予測記事を書いている。現況の動向と重ね合わせる時、同誌の読みの早さ、鋭さに改めて感服させられる。

〈According to one pro-Koizumi legislator, only a third of the party actually supports his reforms.

In the short run, at least, a dignified failure would quietly please many camps. LDP conservatives could claim they drank from the cup of reform, albeit just a teaspoon. The public could accept “reform lite” without much in the way of sacrifice. The banks and government-run agencies would be able to preserve the status quo. Trading partners would not have to suffer from dramatically decreased consumer demand. And Koizumi would join the ranks of all the graybeards who failed to turn Japan around. (By Kay Itoh and Hideko Takayama, Newsweek, July 30, 2001)〉

9月17日の日朝首脳会談に新しい風が吹くのだろうか。この交渉にかける両国の思惑にストレーツタイムズは痛烈だ。

〈Koizumi's Pointless Pilgrimage

It's one of the oldest tricks in the book—a political leader in difficulty at home seeks a foreign-policy success to distract attention from his domestic failures. Few Asian leaders are in more need of such a diversion than Japan's beleaguered Prime Minister

Junichiro Koizumi.

Now, Mr. Koizumi hopes his headline-grabbing pilgrimage to North Korea will reverse the trend and boost his popularity ahead of a crucial cabinet reshuffle. So far the gambit seems to be paying off, with a poll yesterday finding the prime minister's approval rating topping the 50% mark for the first time since shortly after he fired the popular former Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka in January.

Kim's chief reason for talking to Tokyo is that cashing in on guilt over Japan's wartime atrocities is the best bet for propping up his bankrupt regime. If Japan feels the need to offer money to atone for past injustices towards Koreans, it would do better to spend it on the starving refugees fleeing Kim's giant gulag, and offer asylum to those who manage to reach its shores. And if Mr. Koizumi wants to stake his political career on anything then, as one newspaper in Tokyo pointed out yesterday, it would be wiser to do so on something worthwhile—instead of a pointless pilgrimage to Pyongyang. (The Straight Times, Sept. 10)»

日本の企業が挑戦するこの新事業戦略は明となるか暗となるか。移り行く日中経済交流の新しい息吹きは日本の視界を開く朗報だ。ニューヨークタイムズは半頁をさき、報じている。

〈Japan Is Bracing for a 'Designed in China' World

In recent decades, Japanese companies invested to make China the “factory to the world.” In recent months, Japan's blue-chip manufacturers announced investment to make China the “design laboratory to the world.”

In a cascade of announcements this spring, blue-chip Japanese manufacturing companies said they were planning research and development units in China. Spurring the moves are the low wages of Chinese engineers, a growing Chinese market for computer chips and the hope that China's entry into the World Trade Organization will bring protection for patents.

Today's young Japanese have grown up in affluence, taking for granted high wages and their nation's status as the world's second-largest economy. But older Japanese returning from visiting Chinese factories and laboratories report that the hard-working, self-sacrificing Chinese workers remind them of the Japanese workers of the 1960's. (By James Brooke, The New York Times, April 21, 2002)»

Afterword

To the coercive words by the vested-interests-highway lobby of Diet members, which is

resisting Koizumi's efforts to privatize the highway corporations, that the "prime minister is fascist and is engaging in actions exceeding his powers," why can't the prime minister fight back and say. "I, Koizumi, am presently boss of the government?" If he is overrun by the resistance force, lets it do as it pleases and does exactly as it says, not only his public promises, but also his very existance will be ignored, resulting in the deterioration of government and the further worsening of plutocracy and corruption. If this happens, Japan will turn into a terrible society ignoring rules because of a lack of morality, and complete collapse and national ruin will probably advance. The people are placing hopes on the eccentric prime minister giving full play to his excentricity. So "gambare" (stand firm), Prime Minister Koizumi! Koizumi!