

Scientific workers' role in a capitalistic country Japan

Seiji YUASA (Vice President of the WFSW)

Firstly given are **some examples** speaking of the present Japan, where the stronger prey upon the weaker. Then, the social system conceding the law of jungle, and scientific workers' challenge to improving such a social system are briefly described in **the critical moment of Japan and scientific workers' trials**.

Ex. 1: Government should be responsible for decontamination work in Fukushima

In the Haramachi district in Fukushima, farmers without safety measures in place are engaged in radiation decontamination work which is being carried out to give assistance to achieve some recovery of farm management. The farmers of the Haramachi district receive daily wages for restoration work such as removing disaster rubble from farm land and mud from agricultural waterways. This is based on a program that the agriculture ministry is carrying out in the disaster-hit region with the aim to financially support farmers to restart their farming activities. An area where the farmers conduct the work is the former "No-entry zone", now designated as a "special area for decontamination", where the state is responsible for the radiation decontamination work.

The environment ministry's decontamination guideline states that any work conducts in the special area such as mowing grass or scooping out mud from ditches is considered as radiation decontamination work. However, when the Haramachi farmers apply for the program, the agriculture ministry puts no importance on health and safety considerations in regard to radiation doses in the area.

This highlights the negative effects of the government's vertical administrative structure in which the environment ministry is in charge of decontamination work, the labor ministry in charge of safety measures, and the agriculture ministry in charge of support for farmers. Although a post-disaster reconstruction agency was established, it has done nothing.

The Minami-soma city of office found that at two places in the former "No-entry zone" in the Haramachi district, the amount of radiation in the air was 0.26 to 0.35 μSv per hour. The figure exceed 0.23 μSv per hour, the maximum limit for the decommission area set by the central government.

A 70-year-old farmer who is engaged in the restoration work said, "I can't start farming and worry about my future because my only income is the compensation from TEPCO (contaminator of radioactive materials). I have to continue taking part in the work projects. I want the authorities to ensure our safety."

Ex. 2: Stop reactivation of nuclear reactors

Following the Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko's decision to restart Oi nuclear reactors in Oi Town, Fukui Prefecture, Kansai Electric Power Co. started procedures for their reactivation on the night of July 1. The move goes against mounting public opposition to the restart of nuclear power plants. The plant operator plans to have the No. 3 reactor at the Oi plant fully operational on July 8 and No.4 reactor as early as July 24.

All 50 nuclear reactors in Japan had been offline since May 5, and the Noda Cabinet has tried to put an end to this "zero" operation situation as soon as possible and restart the operation of idled reactors throughout Japan. The

Ikata nuclear power plant in Ehime Prefecture (Shikoku) could be the second one to be reactivated. These unacceptable trends are not on the basis of the Noda Cabinet's idea, but on the economic circle's will. The economic circle, The Japan's Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidan-ren) established in 1946, has ever since taken over and controlled the government. The Keidan-ren constructs Japan's profit partnership lobbyist "Nuclear Power Village" and publicizes nuclear safety myth. They just seek "money" rather than human life. The same cozy feature is also seen in the French nuclear power lobbyist composed of economic circle and electric corporations, politicians, bureaucrats, universities and institutes and mass-media, for instance.

The prime minister's decision for the Oi reactivation lacks reason. He said that even hit by a Fukushima-intensity earthquake or tsunami, the Oi plant would not suffer from a serious accident. How can he claim this without fully revealing the cause of the Fukushima nuclear accident? This is truly the return to the new discredited nuclear "safety myth."

The government plans to wait for several years to build a facility to respond to accidents and improve breakwaters at the Oi plant. No one can guarantee that a major quake or tsunami would not hit the plant before then.

Raising the argument of a possible shortage of electricity supply in this summer, Prime Minister Noda asserted that he needs to "protect citizens' living conditions", but this assertion lacks logic. The decision to reactivate the Oi plant indicates that the Noda cabinet has given in to the demands of major businesses that promote the continuation of reliance on nuclear power generation. They do not consider nation's lives before capital accumulation.

Last year a famous politician disclosed his intention that all the nuclear power station should be continued so that nuclear fuel can be transmitted anytime to the basic materials for nuclear arsenals whenever need. Driving of the nuclear plants contributes to nuclear deterrence policy

Public opposition to the restart of nuclear reactors is increasing throughout Japan. On June 29, some 200,000 people took part in a protest action in front of the prime minister's office, the course of actions that have been conducted every Friday since March continues. The government should heed public demands and stop the process of reactivation now.

Ex.3: Hydrogen Revolution against the Oi-plant restart

People are engaging in demonstrations every Friday evening in front of the prime minister's office. Learning of the action from Twitter messages, many people, including workers on their way home, mothers with their children, and many youth converge on the scene and chant "Stop Oi restart!", "Eliminate nuclear power plants!"

The action began with a few hundred protesters in March. Following the Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko's decision to reactivate two nuclear reactors at Kansai Electric Power Co.'s Oi Nuclear Power Plant (Oi City, Fukui Prefecture) at the beginning of June, the number of participants in the demonstration grew and reached 45,000 on June 22. Two days later, in respond to a Twitter message, people assembled to march in demonstration through Funabashi City in Chiba Prefecture, home to Noda's constituency.

Inspired by the "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia, many protesters have started to call these actions the "Hydrogen Revolution." June is the hydrogen season in Japan.

Asked for comment on these demonstrations during Diet deliberations, Prime Minister Node said, "I know that protesters hold demonstrations near my office every Friday. I can hear their chants." He, however, gave the green light to fire up the No. 3 and No. 4 units of the Oi plant. Moreover, regarding this as just a first step, he intends

to bring all the other offline reactors back online as quickly as possible. This apparently shows that the prime minister has no intention to listen to public demands.

The cause and extent of the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Co's Fukushima NPP has yet to be revealed. Nonetheless, the government is rushing to resume the operations of offline nuclear reactors before completing the investigation of the Fukushima accident and the planning for proper evacuation procedures. It is obvious that the government does not care about the fears expressed by not only Oi citizens but also the people in the rest of the country.

If Prime Minister Noda is willing to listen to the demands being expressed by the people participating in the demonstrations which have developed into the "Hydrogen Revolution," he should rethink his reckless plan to restart NPPs.

Ex. 4: Okinawans start sit-in protest against Osprey deployment

Citizens' groups and political parties, on July 9 launched a sit-in protest in front of the U.S. Marine Corp Futenma Air Station in Okinawa's Ginowan City in opposition the Japanese and US governments' plan to deploy the MV-22 Ospreys to the base. The deployments are basically pressed by the two countries' economic circles under the name of the Japan-US Military Partnership Accord.

Braving the stormy weather, protesters put up a tent in an open space in front of the No.1 gate of the Futenma base. Banners and placards, some of which read "GET AWAY! US Marine Corps" in large English characters, have stood along the road leading to the gate. Using a microphone, they called out to commuters, joggers and US soldiers driving from and to the base, "There is no telling when the aircraft may crash. Let's work together to stop the Osprey deployment to Okinawa". The Okinawa United Action Liaison Council (Toitsuren), said, "Okinawans' united efforts have prevented the two governments from building new bases in Henoko and Takae districts in Okinawa Prefecture. Let's stop the deployment through a nationwide campaign."

The sit-in action, being held every day from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. will be continued through September 9. On September 9, a large rally had been planned to be held at Ginowan Seaside Park opposing the deployment.

Ex. 5: Don't raise consumption tax to spend on wasteful public works projects

The Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) election pledge to reduce wasteful public works projects has again been broken. A plan to build three new Shin-kansen (bullet -train) lines was approved right after a passage of a bill to raise the consumption tax rate at the Lower House. It is totally unacceptable for the government to inject a vast amount of tax money into large public works projects, while forcing the public to shoulder another burden of 13.5 trillion yen with a consumption tax increase to 10%.

The Shin-kansen construction was originally planned by the former government led by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The newly-approved plan includes three bullet-train lines: Hokkaido (211 km), Hokuriku (113 km), and Kyushu (21 km), respectively. The estimated total amount of budget for the construction plan may very well need to be increased from the presently allotted amount as the plan to construct three Shin-kansen lines may take many years, for example 24 years for the Hokkaido line.

The Noda Cabinet has given the green light to the Yanba dam construction and the Tokyo Gaikan (outskirt) Expressway (more than 100 million yen for each meter of construction). These plans were once approved by the

former LDP government but frozen by the DPJ government when it took over the ruling party position.

Not only that, DPJ, LDP and Komei Party, in their closed-door revision of the consumption tax hike bill, clearly stated in the bill that the tax revenues will be focused on the use for large public works projects under the name of “economic development” as if of the Imperial standard made of golden brocade. They have now abandoned their claim for the tax increase to “improve social security programs”.

The LDP, which strongly demanded the amendment to the tax hike bill, has submitted to the current Diet session a bill to spend 200 trillion yen over the next 10 years for traditional large public works projects to build “a nationwide express traffic system” and “roads and ports to contribute to strengthening of international competitiveness”.

Such gigantic public works project will only pin huge deficits onto future generations. The DPJ and LDP should stop their backroom politicking to promote the consumption tax increase and large public works projects. Regardless of huge movements against the consumption tax hike, its related bills have passed on August 10 in the Diet. However, the movements against its realization in 2014 (8%) and 2015 (10%) continue.

The critical moment of Japan and scientific workers’ trials

Under the above-mentioned circumstances, all the Japanese (except people sit cross-legged in economic circle) are not necessarily feel happy since their fundamental human rights, large or small, have always been infringed, although the Constitution says “The people shall not be prevented from enjoying any of the fundamental human rights. These fundamental human rights guaranteed to the people by the Constitution shall be conferred upon the people of this and future generations as eternal and inviolate rights (Art.11).” The reason is due to the presence of the economic-circle controlling social system, in which, as capitalistic countries may meet the same tragedy, “to make money under the law of jungle” is a matter of the highest priority in our country. The life of citizens is secondarily considered by way of gaining profit, meaning that the human rights are always neglected.

The social system was commenced by the Keidan-ren established in 1946 in terms of accelerating the economic rehabilitations after the world war II. Then so-called “national projects” carried out in the name of social developments (‘utilizations’ of land, sky, river and sea) , have completely changed the country, culturally and geologically. The Keidan-ren was further encouraged in the presence of the Japan-US military treaties latterly concluded (1960), which has affected Japanese economical advancement. The people’s daily lives have drastically been made worse: 1) privatizations, 2) tax-hike, 3) cut of educational and welfare budgets, 4) tax-exemptions for the rich and 5) possible decrease of self-sufficiency rate after introduction of TPP.

On the other hand, a number of scientific workers have worked hard to give citizens well-life in cooperation with citizens and labor unions.

The despotism of economic circle

“Corporate Japan” Flag

Since the establishment of the Keidan-ren, the government has perfectly been taken over, where all the political and economical systems are processing on the basis of the

Fig.1



Keidan-ren's guideline. The author calls the system "Corporate Japan".

Fig. 1 shows "Corporate Japan" flag. In the usual red area of the national flag is occupied by the top 50 of the rich enterprises (more than 500 are supposed to be organized in the Keidan-ren), which symbolizes the present country. The Keidan-ren is seated at the center of "country". The numbers show the order of the capital gained in 2011.

In Fig. 2, the system of "Corporate Japan" is shown, where the Keidan-ren governing all the enterprises takes over the country or government. The Keidan-ren (Corporation) directs the government basing on their national and international strategies. In the market-orienting society, all the service system including education, well-fare and medical care, and agricultural relations are accordingly exposed to the corporation's prey for pursuing cost performance on the basis of the "money is the first" principle. On behalf of the Keidan-ren, the government orders citizens a strict life; e.g. down-sizing, efficiency, privatization, decrease of service such as medical, well-fare and education, and high tax. As for tax, the government basing on the Keidan-ren's order provides warm service of high tax-exemption to all the enterprises [the top 50 was from 34.9% (2003) to 23% (2011)]. To firmly construct "Corporate Japan", essential is the cozy relation (profit-making lobbyist) among the Keidan-ren, politicians, bureaucrats and "so-called" scientists hunting money and position. Such system, however, has caused a number of human-generated disasters as shown in nuclear plant problems occurred in March 2011. To perfectly achieve "cost performance", the Keidan-ren presses the workers overwork, unstable employment and low salary, in which all the workers' human rights are always infringed.

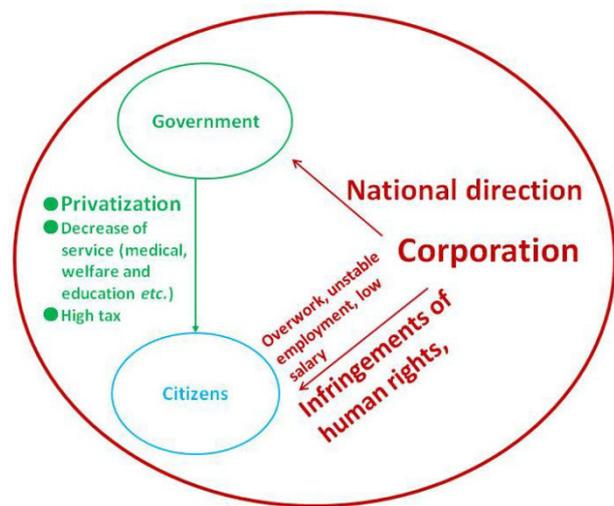


Fig.2 The system of "Corporate Japan"

1. Role of scientific workers

Fig. 3 gives our tackle for the near future, where the corporate system dissociates, and its lawless and despotic actions come to minimize. In case, the scientific workers' coordination with the staff (citizens, government and corporation) would be essential, where scientific workers should participate in the policy making for national developments. Then the corporation should be controlled by the government to minimize bad influence on citizens. The corporation on the other hand guarantee scientific workers' rights and status on the basis of their intimate discussions between them. In due course, we must construct a huge scientific community or society among citizens, governmental sections and economic circle, which would be accelerated by setting collective agreement, and describing charter and ethical code. It should be notified that only scientific consideration and implementation will give the peaceful advancement. The future actions, for instance, refer to the old days' movements of "Friends of Earth" and "Green Peace". Just sitting, thinking and dreaming, it's a shame! We need prompt movements to precede the active mediations among citizens, the government and the corporation.

The purpose of scientific workers is to construct a new social system of the people, by the people and for the

people. It is important to establish the horizontal justice for the present peoples' life and the vertical justice to our descendants. We must do our best for looking after the present environmental concerns including nuclear war-heads and nuclear wastes in the presence of wise methods for the future.

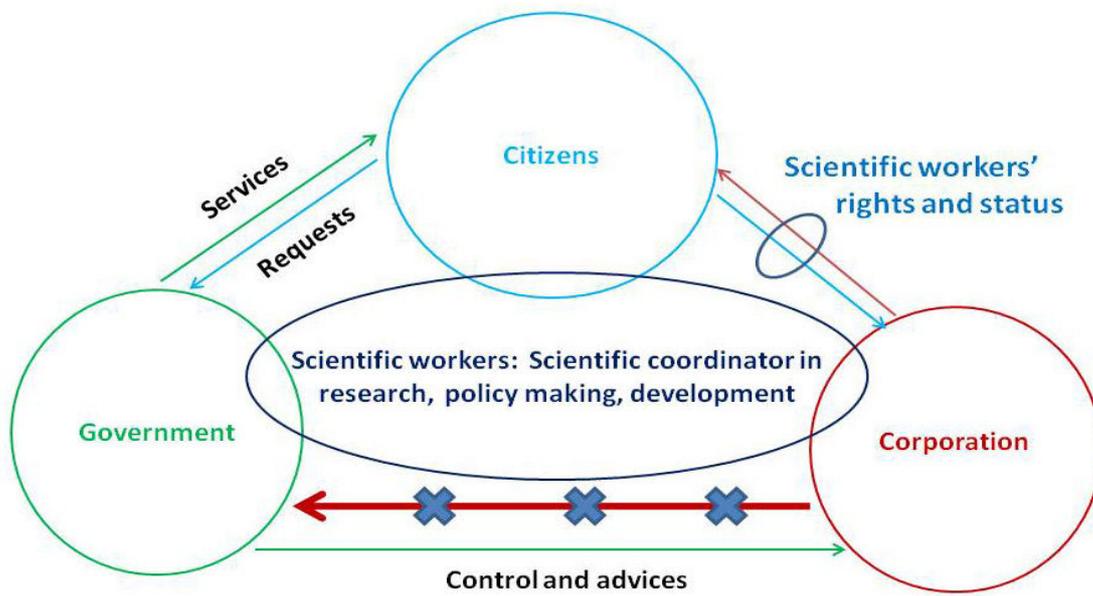


Fig.3 The role of scientific workers