

Second session of the discussion

Ms. Sakurai: Mr. Hakubun Shimomura, a Dietman of the Liberal Democratic Party, who served as deputy cabinet secretary in the Abe cabinet and who helped us arrange Prime Minister Sangay's visit to Japan, has an important announcement to make.

Mr. Shimomura: Tomorrow, around 60 lawmakers (Diet members) will gather across party lines to listen to Prime Minister Sangay's speech. After that, we will adopt a resolution against human rights violations in China. This will be the first time that Japanese lawmakers adopt such a resolution. Regarding the ethnic issues related to the Tibetans, Uyghurs and Mongolians, it is natural that the Chinese government should listen to the respective arguments of these peoples who live within its borders and recognize their human rights and national identities. While reflecting on the fact that the Japanese government and lawmakers have done nothing to support these peoples, the lawmakers must recognize that the Tibetan issue could become a Japanese issue in the future. Tomorrow's meeting will bring together lawmakers across party lines, including senior government officials. The following morning, 14 major lawmakers will have a meeting with Prime Minister Sangay and, recognizing the human rights issue in Tibet as a problem for Japan, we will make a supra-partisan appeal.

Ms. Sakurai: Tomorrow, I think this is going to be a very big news item. Now, Mr. Dolkun Isa will speak.

Mr. Dolkun Isa: We face problems similar to those with which Tibet is confronted. We are suffering from heavier oppression even than the Tibetans. It is not only me who say so, but His Holiness the Dalai Lama often acknowledges it. On July 5, 2009, a peaceful demonstration took place in East Turkestan. The Chinese government announced that 197 people had been killed in relation to the demonstration. But eyewitnesses who fled in exile to such countries as Germany and Canada, particularly young people, have stated that much more people, 2,000 to 3,000 people had been killed.

I think that the international community, specifically the United Nations and the European Parliament, should send independent investigation groups to the area. But the Chinese government has not allowed such groups to visit the area. The Chinese government announced that more than 50 people had been sentenced to death but it has remained silent as to the reason for executing them, describing it as a state secret. If Uyghurs stage a peaceful demonstration, the Chinese government regards it as a terrorist activity. When senior Chinese government officials visit Western countries, they allege that all Uyghurs are terrorists because they are Muslims and Arabs. But when they visit Arab countries, they do not make such allegation because doing so would hurt their relationship with Arab countries. China shows one face to the Western world and another to the Arab world. In East Turkestan, only 250,000 to 300,000 Chinese people lived in 1949. However, Han Chinese people are now said to account for 42% or more of the population in the

region. Uyghurs are increasingly becoming a minority. It is said that 250,000 Chinese people immigrate to East Turkestan each year. This is a new government strategy.

Another strategy is transferring Uyghur women aged around 16 to 25, a marriageable age group, to other parts of China. The Chinese government insists that the transfer is intended to provide jobs to the women. But this is actually intended to have Uyghur women marry Han Chinese. By assimilating as many Uyghurs as possible into Chinese society, the Chinese government intends to gain control over this region. In short, by putting the Uyghur region under its control, the Chinese government aims to grab the rich reserves of natural resources there, such as oil, natural gas and coal. Around 500,000 people work for oil companies. Most of them are Han Chinese. What is even more deplorable is that although the Chinese constitution recognizes the Uyghur language as the official language in the autonomous region, children are not allowed to use the Uyghur language at school. Since 2003, the use of the Uyghur language has been prohibited at all universities in the region. In addition, since 2006, all institutions of education, from kindergartens to universities, have been allowed to use only the Chinese language. This is against the Chinese constitution.

The freedom of expression is one of the most important rights. We have no rights to use our native language or hold gatherings.

East Turkestan was an important part of the Silk Road. But the Chinese government has destroyed this important part of the Silk Road on the dubious pretext of rebuilding old, dangerous buildings.

I believe that Japan cares about the Silk Road, so the country is responsible for preserving the cultural legacy of the Silk Road. Japan is an economic power in Asia and a model of democracy for the region. Therefore, Japan bears significant responsibility for supporting the pro-freedom movement of the Uyghurs, Tibetans and Mongolians. To promote the democratization process in China, we expect support from the Japanese society and government. I presume many Japanese people are unaware of the suffering of the Uyghurs. I think that my comments before the Japanese audience here will be the first step toward raising their awareness.

Ms. Sakurai: The oppression that the Uyghur people have suffered is terrible. And the Mongolians have also been suffering from oppression. Now, let us hear from Mr. Olhunud Daichin about the situation in Mongolia.

Mr. Olhunud Daichin: I am a Chinese by nationality but a Mongolian by race. I am deploring my extraordinary situation, and I suppose that five or six million Mongolians who are in the same situation as me feel the same way. To cite an example of our struggle against China, King Lord De fought with the Chinese Nationalist Party and its military clique for the independence of South Mongolia for more than 10 years. The region later maintained its semi-independent status for more than 10 years as they received support from Japan. But after Japan was defeated in World War II, all resistance against China came to an end. The

Chinese Nationalist Party and its military clique killed many Mongolians and grabbed Mongolian land. The Chinese Communist Party was always telling us that if we joined hands with them and fought against the Nationalist Party, we would be able to live a happy life with equal status as Chinese. So, the Mongolians joined hands with the Chinese Communist Party and fought against the Nationalist Party and its military clique in northeastern China. However, the promise of a happy life turned out to be false. Compared with the period of the rule of the Nationalist Party, more Mongolians were killed and the Mongolians suffered more. The fact that China's Great Cultural Revolution started in the Inner Mongolia has been established by decades of research conducted by Professor Akira Ono of Shizuoka University, who comes from Mongolia. One month before the Great Cultural Revolution started, the head of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous region who was also the military commander was ousted from power. According to statistics compiled by researchers, as many as 100,000 Mongolians were tortured to death at the time of the Great Cultural Revolution. Many Chinese say that the number is insignificant. However, in South Mongolia, there was only 1.5 million Mongolians at that time. Of the 1.5 million Mongolians, 100,000 were killed and nearly 100,000 others were physically disabled as a result of torture. The Mongolians suffered so much during the Great Cultural Revolution. After the revolution, the promise of a happy life was never realized.

All levers of power and authority were seized by Han Chinese of the Chinese Communist Party. There are some figurehead officials representing the Mongolians. For example, the head of the Inner Mongolia is still a Mongolian person. However, all other people are Han Chinese, and whatever individual Mongolians may say, it won't achieve any results. On May 10 last year, there was an incident in the Inner Mongolia. A Chinese truck driver ran over and killed a Mongolian. The driver declared that the life of a Mongolian is worth less than 400,000 yuan while his truck was safely insured against an accident. Incidents like this are still occurring in modern China. At the time of the Great Cultural Revolution, a regiment leader of the People's Liberation Army wrote in a war record: "It doesn't matter if 1,000 Mongolians are killed because in the southern parts of China, there are lots of people.

Just as Mongolians roast a sheep whole, soldiers of the People's Liberation Army burned Mongolians alive, according to an eyewitness account given by a conscientious Chinese intellectual. In northeastern China 100 years ago, Han Chinese also killed Mongolians to grab land. Such massacre also happened during the Great Cultural Revolution. It occurred again last year. The Han Chinese have not changed a bit. Neither Tibet nor Mongolia was ever under the control of China historically. They were two independent countries.

However, we are suffering very much now. The Chinese Communist Party prohibits grazing and forces Mongolians to migrate out of their land to urban areas. The Chinese government claims that grazing destroyed the environment, so 160,000 Mongolians have been forced to migrate out of their own land since 2000 on the pretext of restoring the environment to its former condition. However, the environment was not restored at all. Coal, oil, natural gas and rare earths are produced in the Inner Mongolia. Environmental destruction in the region was caused not by grazing but by excessive cultivation of land, excessive

industrialization and excessive mining of mineral resources. This also affects the Japanese people. Every spring, the Japanese people suffer from the yellow sand blown from the Inner Mongolia, which contains various pollutants. We would like the Japanese people to raise their voice not only over the human rights issue but also over racial discrimination. That will give us hopes for future happiness.

Ms. Sakurai: The Chinese crackdown against other nationalities is fiendish. China has massacred millions of people in ways that are atrocious beyond description. I'm particularly interested in a demonstration staged last May in the Inner Mongolia. People who participated in the demonstration were very young. They have been educated in Chinese and forced to think in Chinese ways. If they please China, they can live a comfortable life. Such young Mongolians took to the street. The situation is the same for the Uyghur people. They are prohibited from visiting mosques. The crackdown is such that if they try to stick with their religion, they are regarded as terrorists. However, young people took to the streets. That is also true in Tibet. The demonstrations that occurred in Tibet in 2008 and later mostly involved young people, people aged 18 to 20. They have been educated in ways that make them believe that a socialist regime is a "paradise." But they have turned out to be anti-Chinese. It is human nature to never stop craving for freedom and democracy. After all, we are all human beings.

Mr. Dolkun Isa: Unfortunately, the Uyghur issue is little known in Japanese society, so the first step should be to raise awareness about the Uyghur issue. We have nothing common with the Chinese culture or language. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, we have been allowed to go abroad. However, the Uyghurs are afraid to be involved in activities to advocate the Uyghur cause, as they carry Chinese passports. That is because if they return to China, they would be immediately arrested. Relatives remaining in China may be punished.

We are Muslims. Western countries do not welcome Muslims. But Islam and Muslims in East Turkestan are not radical.

I would like to ask the Japanese government to speak out against Chinese atrocities at the U.N. Human Rights Commission and I want the Japanese people to talk and write about this issue. Democratic countries should speak out on this issue. Japan has a significant presence in Asia. Japan should raise this issue when the Chinese president visits Tokyo or when the Japanese prime minister goes to Beijing. I would like to ask Japan to raise its voice loudly over the human rights issue.

Ms. Sakurai: I feel pained to hear what you said. We have now entered an age when we have to fight for democracy, freedom and human rights. I personally feel Japan should be at the forefront of this fight. What would you like Japan to do?

Mr. Olhunud Daichin: Let me talk about one more specific matter. We live in a free society like this and have the freedom of speech.

But the most important issue is what would happen if I returned home. Around 10,000 people from the Inner Mongolia are living, studying and working in Japan.

However, only a handful of them speak out about Chinese atrocities in public. If their activities become known, they would be immediately arrested after returning home. There is a person who was arrested merely for studying about Turkestan.

Prof. Takubo: In the first part of this forum, we talked about the wave of pro-freedom movement. In the second part, we discussed the human rights issue. The Japanese people must be most sensitive to the human rights issue. One of the factors that caused Japan's war with the United States was racial discrimination against the Japanese. The emperor (the late Emperor Showa) mentioned this in his memoirs. Emperor Showa described it as a major indirect cause of the war. When Mr. Kinmochi Saionji participated in the negotiations about the Treaty of Versailles that ended the enmity of the First World War as the chief delegate of the Japanese government, he argued that racial discrimination was wrong. Japan spoke out against racial discrimination for the first time on this occasion. Why has Japan become a country like this? When His Holiness the Dalai Lama came to Japan, the Japanese government was unable to invite him to the prime minister's office. Mr. Obama, despite — or perhaps because of — his "liberal" labeling, had no difficulty inviting His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the White House.

Is the Japanese government concerned about or afraid of something? To put it bluntly, the Japanese government is anxious to avoid offending other countries. The greatest reason for that is Japan's fear of China. On the one hand, China and other countries are becoming increasingly mutually dependent economically. On the other hand, when it comes to diplomacy, each of us Japanese has until now avoided answering the question of how Japan should deal with this monster, which uses intimidation to achieve its diplomatic ends on the strength of its military power. Our only response has been to seek to become an economic power while pursuing disarmament. There is a striking contrast between the current situations of Japan and China: whereas Japan's position as an economic power has been shaken, China is becoming economically affluent and militarily strong. Unless Japan achieves national renewal by scrapping its postwar regime quickly and adopting a new constitution, Japan will lose its way. Renewed Japan must be a country that can speak out loudly for freedom and human rights.

Ms. Sakurai: As I visit countries in Asia, I feel their great expectations for Japan, and because of the great expectations, the sense of disappointment is all the more stronger. They are wondering why Japan does not face up to China squarely. Most Asian countries stand behind Japan. Japan is a country of samurais. They believe that Japan plays the role it should play, it is willing to fight when necessary and it is gentle in heart.

However, while Japan remains gentle in heart, it seems to have forgotten the fighting spirit. In such a state, Japan cannot face up to China. Asian countries are afraid of the Chinese threat, and Japan is also feeling the Chinese threat. The issue is how Japan should deal with this threat. Asian countries say that if Japan shows its willingness to face up to China, they will be encouraged very much.