

China Likely to Settle Battle between Rule of Law and That of Men

Tadae Takubo

International attention now focuses on Beijing. Premier Wen Jiabao, who has come to a spotlight since the October 25 New York Times story on his family's colossal fortune, described Chinese Communist Party leaders' corruptions as affecting the survival of the party and the state and called for fair party leaders, clean government and transparent politics at a discussion meeting with a delegation from Tianjin in Beijing on November 8. I was surprised to hear the plastic remark treating corruptions as someone else's problem.

Responding to a question from a journalist at a discussion meeting with provincial delegations, the party's Shanghai chief Yu Zhengsheng noted he told his child not to have contact with Shanghai officials, explaining how he was trying to prevent corruptions. Yu also said that as long as the party made a decision on the publication of leaders' assets, he could do it easily because he did not have that many assets.

China as a corrupt superpower

While most of people in China have no knowledge about the truth under the gag rule, the entire rest of the world has gotten aware of realities in the corrupt superpower. After U.S. news service Bloomberg reported the Xin Jinping family's accumulated riches last June, the Chinese government blocked access to the Bloomberg website.

Then, The New York Times on October 25 used three pages to carry a major report on the Wen Jiabao family's corruption problem. The report, which was partially introduced in Japan, built on fine-tuned investigations to give a finding that the family accumulated \$2.7 billion in riches, 80% of which were held by, among others, his mother, his younger brother, two brothers-in-law, a sister-in-law, daughter-in-law and the parents of his son's wife.

Surprisingly, as the Communist Party's rules require party leaders to make public assets held only by themselves and their stem family members, Wen has not been required to make public riches held by his collateral relatives. This is the reason Wen can describe himself as a fair party leader and call for a clean government.

The fact that Yu's remark came in response to a question by a journalist indicates that the New York Times report can no longer be kept unknown in China.

Single party dictatorship being shaken

Since then U.S. President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, the United States has retained a tacit strategy of incorporating China into the international community in all aspects to democratize the communist country.

The strategy has been frequently criticized as a failure in and outside the United States.

But the growing discussions in China on whether corruptions are wrong apparently indicate the single party dictatorship has begun to be shaken. A battle between the rule of law and that of men may be settled soon. China's democratization may be far faster than North Korea's.

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