

## **I Am Proud of Japan Supporting Tibet**

Yoshiko Sakurai

On November 13, the hall of the House of Councilors Members Office Building was dominated with an air of excitement. Present were 134 Diet members and 98 proxies who gathered to listen to a lecture by Tibet's 14th Dalai Lama on "Universal Responsibility and Human Values."

House of Representatives member Seishu Makino made an address there on behalf of the colleagues from the Democratic Party of Japan and Liberal Democratic Party President Shinzo Abe on behalf of his party. "We vow to make our best to turn around the present situation where human rights are suppressed," Abe said. Lawmakers from all major Japanese political parties other than the Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party attended the lecture meeting, indicating Japan's effective commitment to struggle for human freedom as symbolized by the Tibet freedom movement.

### **Suprapartisan group criticizes human rights crackdown**

The Dalai Lama, in line with his earlier pronouncement that he had retired from politics, discussed the most spiritual challenges as a Buddhist and refrained from making any political remarks. As a Tibetan, however, he naturally emphasized that his fellow citizens were suffering from Beijing's severe crackdown. China was wrong in believing that Tibetans, if given high-level autonomy, would separate from China, he said. Citing India where diverse religions and races coexist, he said Tibetans were ready to live within the framework of the Chinese Communist Party regime if their autonomy were guaranteed. These remarks by the Dalai Lama were persuasive.

In response to the Dalai Lama lecture, Japanese lawmakers unanimously adopted a stern appeal urging the Chinese government to improve its unjust human rights crackdown in Tibet, Uyghur and other places. They also decided to create a parliamentary league for supporting Tibet.

The determination and action of Japanese politicians were great and comparable to those of American and European counterparts. I am proud that our Japan Institute for National Fundamentals has made contributions to realizing the action.

### **Arm with values to struggle with China**

The Chinese Embassy in Tokyo harshly obstructed our invitation of Prime Minister of the Tibetan government in exile Dr. Lobsang Sangay to Japan for a meeting with Diet members in April and World Uyghur Congress President Rebiya Kadeer's visit to Japan in May. No such obstruction was seen regarding the Dalai Lama's latest Japan visit. But China cannot be expected to make any concession on Tibet, as is the case with territorial quarrels over the Senkaku Islands and the South China Sea. Beijing is certain to take some next action. If Japan puts forward freedom, humanitarianism and human rights protection as its national slogans, however, China may not be able to easily counter Japan. It is significant for Japan to put forward such values in struggling with China.

In protest to the Chinese government's rule of Tibet, six Tibetans attempted self-immolation just before the Chinese Communist Party convened its National Congress on November 8. On November 9, several thousands of Tibetan students staged a protest rally in a Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Qinghai Province. Although the Chinese government mobilized 1.4 million security guards throughout China for the National Congress, they failed to prevent citizen from seeking freedom. Therefore, we feel signs that the fundamental human thirst for freedom could trigger China's reform from the inside. This is the reason Japan should put forward such values as human rights, democracy and the rule of law in struggling with China based in a resolute manner.

*Yoshiko Sakurai is President, Japan Institute for National Fundamentals.*