

Local Politicians in Japan (4)

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7 Political Ladders

7.1 Where Local Politicians Go Ahead

Local politicians have been regarded as main human resources for national law makers². According to the research by Uchida, 32% of LDP members had the background of local politician, 22% had

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2 The others are bureaucrats and national lawmakers' secretary.

that of bureaucrat and 16% had that of secretary of the Parliament Member³. Among local politicians, prefectural assembly members shared the largest.

It is especially stressed that the lower house members whose background had been governors were more than 20 during 50's and 60's. The number sometimes exceeded 30 including the upper house. In those days, not a few governors sought for national lawmakers' post after one term or two.

The number of the lower house members who had the background of mayor has been around 10 to 20. Some had experienced the minister but from this category, no prime minister has been turned out⁴.

7. 2 The Impact of Introduction of Single Constituency

The system of single constituency has been introduced to the election of the lower house members since 1996. In Japan, the population scale of each single constituency ranged from 300,000 to 500,000 and this was correspondent with that of the core city.

Before the introduction, some expected that the mayors who were regarded as "local presidents" would be much more advantageous than other candidates because they were popular among local residents through mayoral election.

In this research, whether this assumption was true or not is investigated. First, the results of election in 1990, 1993, 1996 and 2000 are selected. First two elections were conducted by the system of multiple constituency and the latter two were by newly single constituency.

Table 7. 1 shows the change of the number of candidates by

3 Uchida Kenzo, *Gendai Nihon no Seijigaku* (Politicians in modern Japan) Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989, pp'161-162.

4 Among the categories of local politicians, governor, prefectural assembly member and city assembly member produced at least one prime minister or more each.

background. Among categories of local politicians, mayor, prefectural assembly member and city assembly member are selected.

Table 7. 1 The change of the number of candidates (Unit : Number)

Occupational Background	1990	1993	1996	2000
Mayor	20	17	26	19
Prefectural Assembly Member	207	208	232	209
City Assembly Member	78	68	130	119

As this table indicates, the number of all three categories in 1996 is more than that in 1993. Prefectural assembly members are regarded as one of the most dominant candidates for national lawmakers. Table 7. 2 shows the number of the elected by category.

Table 7. 2 The change of the number of the elected (Unit : Number)

Occupational Background	1990	1993	1996	2000
Mayor	14	13	13	8
Prefectural Assembly Member	132	130	129	111
City Assembly Member	43	37	43	40

Table 7. 3 The change of the ratio of the elected (Unit : %)

Occupational Background	1990	1993	1996	2000
Mayor	70.0%	76.5%	50.0%	42.1%
Prefectural Assembly Member	63.8%	62.5%	55.6%	53.1%
City Assembly Member	55.1%	54.4%	33.1%	33.6%
Local Politician ⁵	61.9%	61.1%	46.7%	43.7%
Total ⁶	53.7%	53.5%	33.3% ⁷	34.2%

5 Besides mayor, prefectural assembly member and city assembly member, governor, town and village mayor and town and village assembly member are included to the category of local politician.

6 Every candidate is included to the total.

Table 7. 4 The change of the ratio of newly elected (Unit : %)

Occupational Background	1990	1993	1996	2000
Mayor	33.3%	50.0%	28.6%	14.3%
Prefectural Assembly Member	46.4%	46.8%	35.5%	17.6%
City Assembly Member	44.2%	51.5%	21.3%	12.5%
Local Politician	43.7%	45.2%	26.1%	14.5%
Total	28.1%	29.6%	11.9%	12.1%

Before the introduction of single constituency, the ratio of the elected who had the background of city mayor was higher than that of other categories. In 1990, 14 out of 20 candidates who had the background of city mayor won the election and in 1993, 13 out of 17. The ratio of the elected was 70% and 76.5% respectively.

Among newcomer, 2 out of 6 and 3 out of 6 won the election in 1990 and 1993 respectively. These ratios of success are higher than the total average (Table 7. 4).

This trend has changed since the introduction of single constituency. The number of candidates who had the background of mayor was 17 in 1993 and increased to 26 in 1996. That of prefectural assembly member changed from 208 to 232 and that of city assembly member drastically increased from 68 to 130.

The main reason why the number of candidates with city assembly member's background increased is the strategy of JCP which recommended not a few people who had the background of city assembly member in order to fulfill all of three hundred constituencies with its candidate.

As for the ratio of the elected, about three out of four who had the background of city mayor won the election in 1993 but only the half survived in 1996. The ratio of the elected who had the background of prefectural assembly member failed from 62.5% to

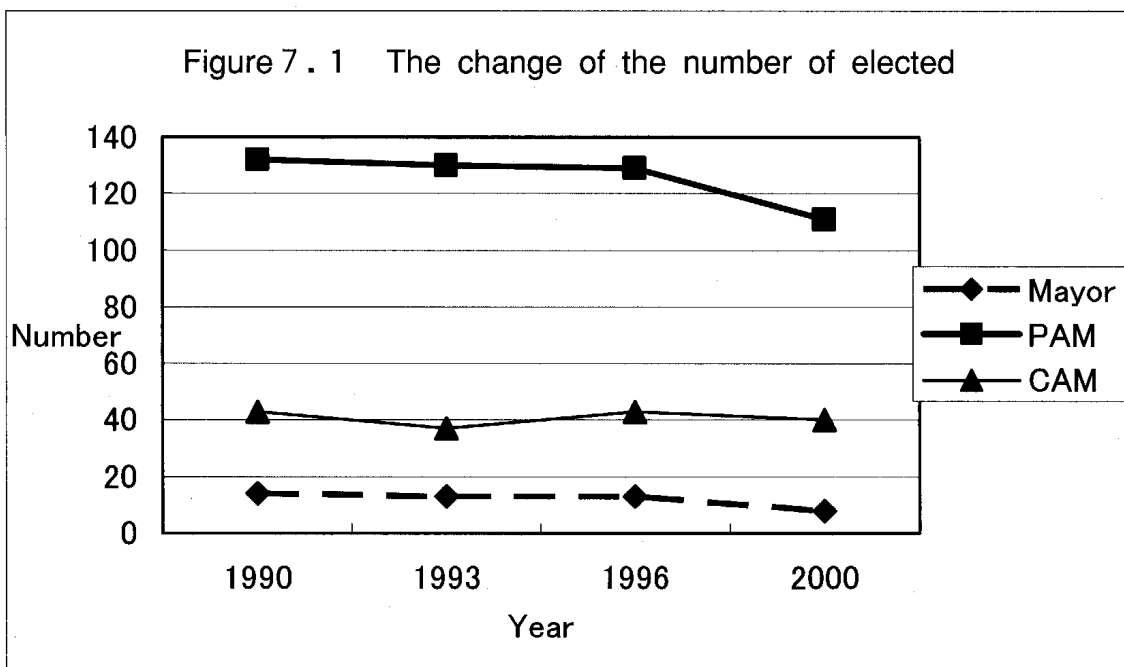
7 The ratio of the elected in 1996 is lower than that in 1993 because of the rapid increase of candidates. Major parties tried to select one candidate to every constituency. As a consequence, the number of candidates reached 1503 in 1996.

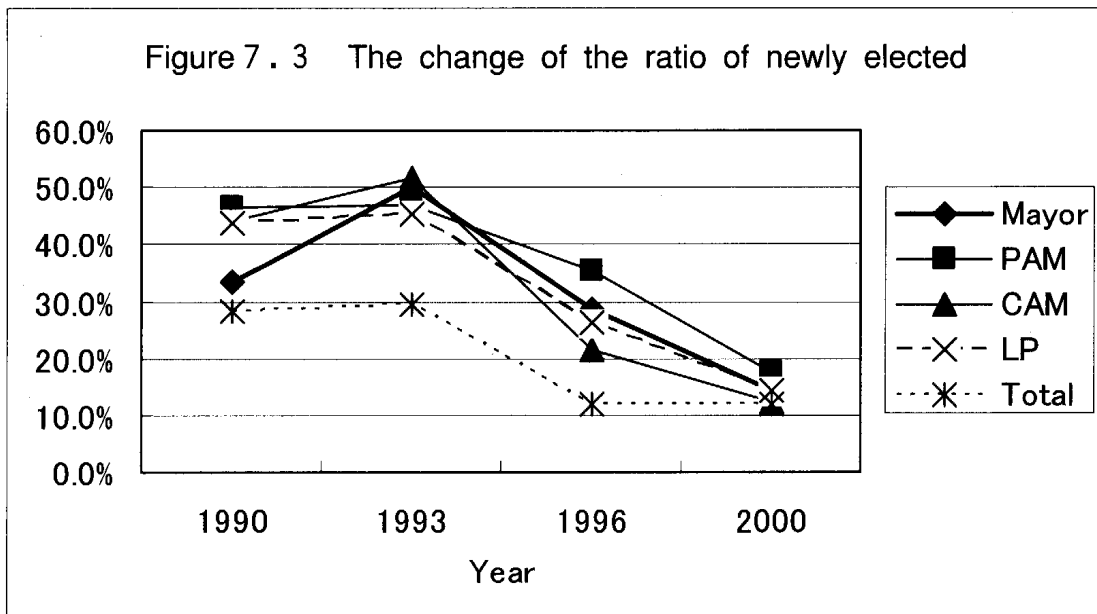
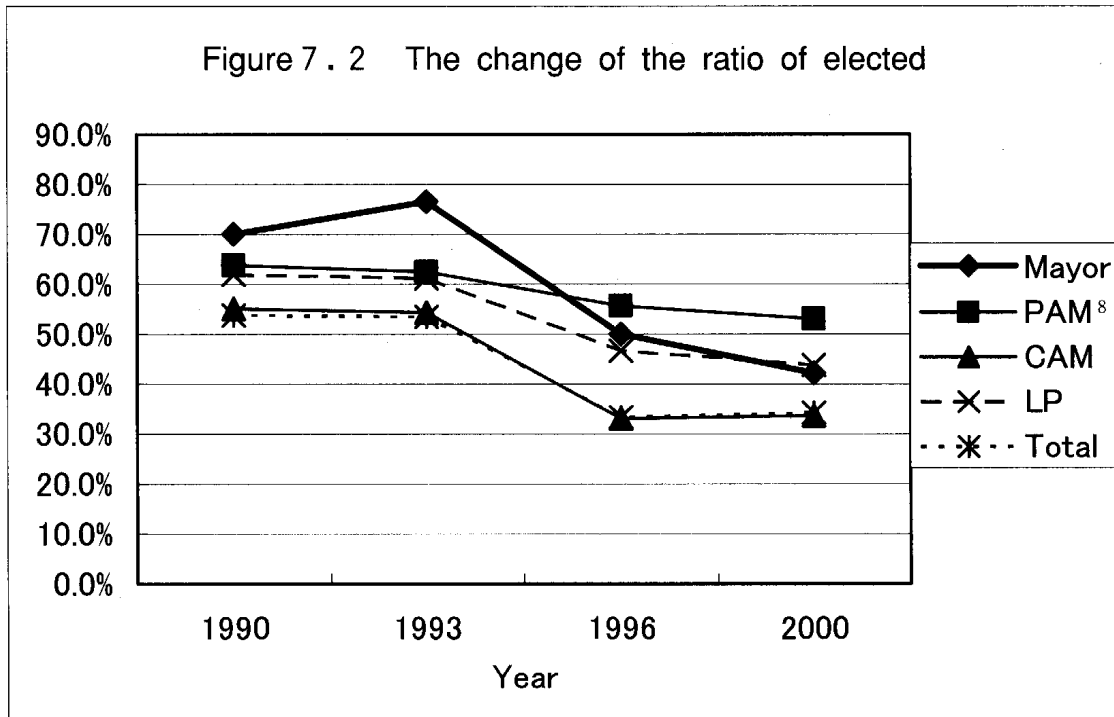
55.6% and that of city assembly member from 54.4% to 34.1%.

When the scope is limited to the newcomer, only 4 out of 14 were elected in 1996. In case of single constituency, only 2 out of 12 were elected. As far as the result of election in 1996 is concerned, the assumption that the profile of city mayors would be much more advantageous than other candidates by the introduction of single constituency is not proved to be right.

In 2000, the number of candidates by every category of local politician reduced. In case of city mayor, it reduced from 26 to 19 and when the scope is limited to newcomer, from 14 to 7. This sharp reduction of candidates with city mayor's background is mainly due to the terrible defeat in 1996. Considering the number of candidates of newcomer with city mayor's background in 1990 and 1993, however, the figure in 2000 seems to be regarded as the usual one.

As for the number of the elected, 8 out of 19, 111 out of 209 and 40 out of 119 were elected in case of the background of city mayor, prefectural assembly member and city assembly member respectively. The ratio of the elected with prefectural assembly member's background was declined a bit and that with city assembly member's background almost remained same level as in 1996





8 PAM is the abbreviation of prefectural assembly member, CAM is that of city assembly member and LP is that of local politician.

On the other hand, the ratio of the elected with city mayor's background continues to be reduced. The every ratio of the newly elected as for the category of local politician was below 20% in 2000.

In general, the candidates who had the background of local politician were relatively weak in the election of 2000.

From these data, it is fair to say that the merit of candidates who had the background of city mayor as "local president" was overestimated in case of the election of single constituency. At the same time, however, which political parties recommended should be also taken into consideration. In 1996, 8 out of 26 candidates who had the background of city mayor were nominated or received recommendation from ruling parties and 6 out of 8 were elected. 15 received the support from opposite parties but only 7 were elected. In 2000, 6 out of 11 candidates from ruling parties were elected, but only 2 out of 6 candidates from opposite parties were elected.

Concerning the candidates who had the background of city mayor and also received the support from ruling parties, the merit as "local presidents" seems to be still alive.

7. 3 After 2000

As the previous section indicates, the introduction of single constituency was not always advantageous to the candidates who had the background of city mayor. After 2000, general elections were held twice. In this section, newly standing candidates for the lower house member election are investigated. Figure 7. 3 shows the change of the ratio of the newly elected from 1990 to 2000. The ratio of the newly elected by every category has dropped down since 1996.

Table 7. 5 shows the change of the number of new candidates by category. Compared the number of 2000 with 2003 and 2005, almost every category reduced. Especially, the number of new candidates of PAM in 2005 reduced less than half of 1990.

Table 7. 6 shows the change of the number of the newly elected by category. The number of the newly elected who had the background of city mayor was 2 and 3 in 2003 and 2005

Table 7. 5 The change of number of the new candidates by category⁹

	1990	1993	1996	2000	2003	2005
Mayor	6	6	14	7	5	4
PAM	84	77	107	68	56	41
CAM	43	33	89	72	46	62
CEO ¹⁰	9	7	19	8	7	8
LAM ¹¹	133	119	215	158	125	133

Table 7. 6 The change of the number of the newly elected by category¹²

	1990	1993	1996	2000	2003	2005
Mayor	2	3	4	1	2	3
PAM	39	36	38	12	17	14
CAM	19	17	19	9	3	5
CEO	3	4	4	2	3	7
LAM	59	53	57	22	20	19

respectively. The number of candidates reduced but that of the elected increased. Besides, 7 out of 8 CEOs succeeded in 2005. From this fact, some may believe that the previous assumption revives.

However, among 7, 2 were from a representative constituency and 4 were defeated in a single constituency but elected in a representative constituency by revival. In short, only 1 was elected in a single constituency. The result of 2005 did not show the advantage of the experience of CEO.

Switching the topic from CEO to LAM, the total number of candidates in 1990 and 1993 is almost same as that in 2003 and 2005 but the number of the elected in 2003 and 2005 is only one third of

9 CEO and LAM include duplication.

10 CEO includes governor, city mayor and town and village mayor.

11 LAM is the abbreviation of local assembly member.

12 Ibid.

that in 1990. As these data indicate, LAM has become less prosperous candidate for the lower house member. The reason is not clear but the introduction of single constituency is influential to some extent.

The results of the selection of candidates by LDP in recent elections apparently show the tendency for LAM to be less selected. It seems to many citizen that LAMs are familiar with local issues but not so popular and in the scheme of single constituency to which only one candidate is elected, popular candidate who receive media attention seems to be more favorable than well practiced politician from the viewpoint of political battle.

8 Corruption and Recent Issues

8.1 Outline

It seems to be almost impossible for local politics to escape from corruptions. If you read several local newspapers carefully, you will not fail to find the articles about corruptions by local politicians. It is difficult to deal with every kind of scandal conducted by them. In this chapter, the focus is on the corruption of city mayor from 1984 to 2002.

February in 2002 was the worst month for city mayors. Three incumbent and one ex mayor were arrested. In the era of decentralization, self decision making and self responsibility is the key word. If such corruptions do not stop, central government might deprive local government of some of its authority and change its mind from decentralization to centralization.

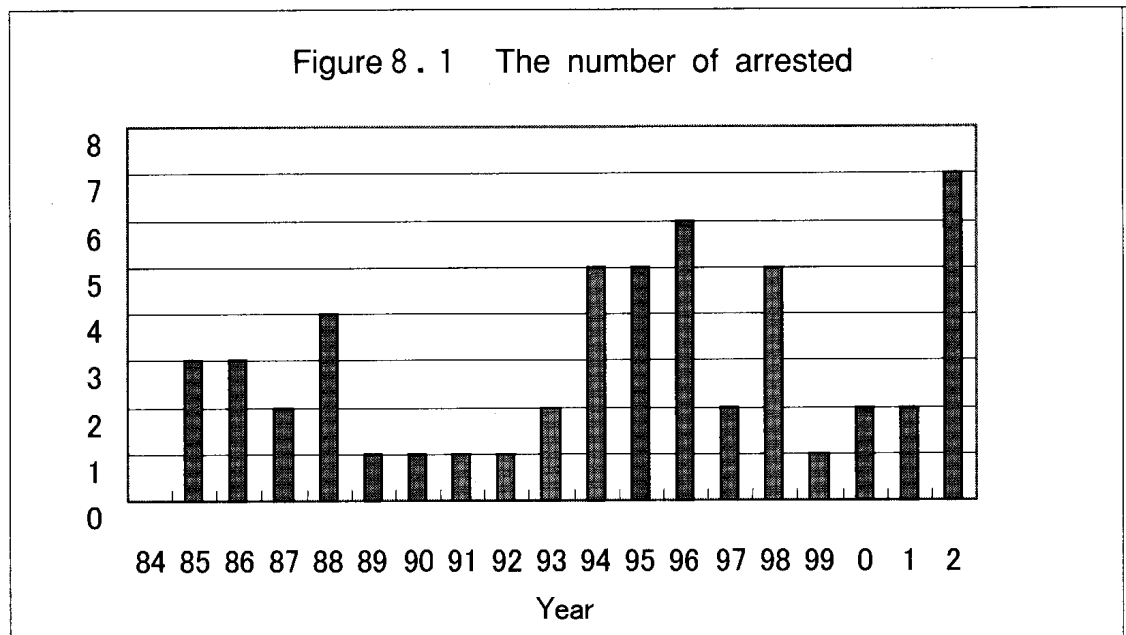
We can find several patterns as for the crimes by city mayors. It is said that the most crimes committed by politicians including city mayors are those concerning the election campaign. Those include crime of bribery, the violation of election activity, voting, media activity, violation by civil servant and so on. Among them, taking bribes by politicians frequently receive severe criticism.

8.2 Trend of Crime Committed by City Mayor

The corruptions are not the recent issues, however, it is difficult to grasp the accurate information about the scandal in the past. In this research, the scandal between September in 1984 and August in 2002 is targeted¹³.

Among 18 years, 44 incumbent city mayors and 9 former city mayors, in total, 53 were arrested. Simply calculating, on average, every year about 3 mayors were arrested. The change of the arrested is shown in Figure 8. 1. From 1985 to 1988, the number was from 2 to 4 and from 1989 to 1992, the number was only 1.

From 1994 to 1998 the number was five or more except in 1997. Again, the number remained two or less but in 2002 the number marked the highest.



13 In this section, Internet research site, "asahi.com Perfect" conducted by Asahi Newspaper is used. As the keywords for research, "mayor" and "arrest" are applied. Besides research by internet, Nichigai Associates, ed., *Gendai Seijila Jinmeijiten* (Biographical Dictionary of Modern Japanese Politician). Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, 1999 is used.

It might be rash of me to connect the number of the arrested with the economic situation but in depression, the number increased and in prosperity, vis versa.

Most of mayors arrested were due to taking bribes as the reward for providing the benefit in case of construction tendering. From 1989 to 1992, in the midst of bubble economy and public works shrunk, the number of the arrested was only one every year. After the collapse of bubble economy, to stimulate economy, a lot of public works were launched by the initiative of central government and local governments played important roles as service provider. Not a few public works were conducted by them and construction companies were eager to win bids. Is this only by chance?

Among 53 mayors' suspicions, 41 were taking bribes, that is, four-fifth was arrested due to bribery. Among 41 briberies, 8 received money as reward for the recruitment of official and others were concerning the benefit of project, tendering, approval of development and so on. The amount of bribe ranges from several hundred thousand yen to more than hundred million yen. In many cases, bribes were received not only by city mayor but also by senior officials and city assembly members.

Besides, 8 were arrested by violating election law, 2 were by giving bribe and 2 were by more or less personal crime such as fraud and misappropriation.

These scandals are categorized into patterns below ;

1 Violation of election law

- Donation to the persons concerned
- Giving bribe
- Abuse of position as civil servant

2 Taking bribe

3 Giving bribe

4 Personal crime

- Misappropriation
- Fraud

The scandal such as corruption seems to be the product of the long regime but as the data show, it is not correct. Among the

arrested in office, 12 were on the first term, 13 on the second, 12 on the third, 4 on the fourth, 2 on the fifth and 1 on the eighth. On average, on 2.5 th term, they were arrested. This is almost same as that of all incumbent mayors as of 2001, 2.3th term.

Among 53, 10 (18.9%) had the background of both prefectural assembly member and city assembly member and 29 (55 %) had the background of local assembly member. These figures are higher than the average and city mayors who had the background of local assembly member are more likely involved in the corruption.

8. 3 Regional Tendency

As for the regional tendency, the arrested are found in specific prefectures. Ibaragi was the most, that is, 7 mayors were arrested. The second was Tochigi, 5 and the third was Aichi and Fukuoka of 4. Ibaragi and Tochigi are located to northern Kanto region. Total population of these two prefectures is only 5 million, less than 4% of total Japan. More than 20% of corruption by city mayors is concentrated on this area. As of 2001, the number of city in Ibaragi is 20 and that in Tochigi is 12. Among 32 cities, 10 produced the corrupted mayors and two cities, Kitaibaragi and Imaichi produced 2. One third of cities in this region once or twice suffered from mayor's corruption.

In Ibaragi, the then incumbent governor was arrested by the suspicion of taking bribe from some construction companies in 1993. At the central level, the Diet members from Ibaragi were also arrested. It is pointed out that Ibaragi is infamous for money politics¹⁴. In 2002, in connection with the intermediary scandal of public works by ex secretary of the Parliament Member, 2 incumbent mayors in Ibaragi were arrested at a time.

In northern Kanto region, 14 were arrested, 10 in Kyusyu, on

14 Asahi Shinbun2002/02/16, an interview to the professor Igarashi of Hosei University.

the other hand, Tohoku was 2, Hokkaido was 1 and Chugoku was 0. A lot of authorities are concentrated on the hand of city mayor and this is true of every city in Japan. The regional gap of corruption might be induced by regional political climate to some extent.

8. 4 Some Cases

8. 4. 1 Imaichi city

In Imaichi city, previous and the then incumbent mayors were arrested at a time from December 1986 to February 1987. The previous mayor, Akio Saitou, who was defeated mayor's election in April 1986 after his three consecutive terms, was arrested for receiving money as reward for the recruitment of an official from his parent in 1986¹⁵. Next month, he was again arrested for taking bribe in connection with public school construction work¹⁶.

Saitou was first elected to the city assembly member in 1963 and elected to Tochigi prefectural assembly member in 1967. After two months from his arrest, the then incumbent mayor, Nori Fukuda was arrested for bribe and the violation of election law.

Both received the bribe from the same company. In other words, the company paid the bribe to both candidates not to be treated unfairly in the tendering of public works after election. Fukuda became prefectural assembly member in 1975 after working as a public school teacher.

8. 4. 2 Kikuchi city

In Kikuchi city in Kumamoto prefecture, the then city mayor, Keishin Takagi was arrested for bribery in May 1989. He received one million yen as the reward for recruitment of an official. Next month, he was rearrested for the bribery concerning the selection of vice mayor and treasurer¹⁷. The person who gave the bribe to the

15 Asahi Shinbun1986/12/5, p.22.

16 Asahi Shinbun1987/1/6, p.22.

17 Asahi Shinbun1989/5/12, p.23.

mayor were the candidate of vice mayor and treasurer, that is, the then treasurer and the then director-general¹⁸. Kikuchi city lost three top officials at a time and local government in total lost its credibility.

8.4.3 Oumura city

The case in Oumura city indicates the case of typical bribery. In 1994, the then mayor, Matsumoto was arrested for receiving several million yen as the reward for giving the benefit to the public works¹⁹. He was on his second term. His father was former mayor, his mother and brother were ex Nagasaki prefectural assembly members and his wife was the daughter of the prefectural assembly member, that is, he came from political family.

He was found guilty of bribery and after the suspension of civil right, he challenged mayoral election again in 2002 and defeated the incumbent.

9 Evaluation of Presidential System of Local Government in Japan

Through my paper, the realities of governor, mayor, right hand of CEO and assembly member is described. Local politics is anything but dull. A lot of unique characters are found in the profiles of local politicians. In this chapter, as a conclusion, how presidential system of local government in Japan should be evaluated and some proposals are discussed.

9.1 Evaluation of Leadership

In accordance with decentralization, the post of top of local government has been regarded more attractive than before especially from the viewpoint of national civil servant and national

18 Asahi Shinbun1989/6/23, p.23.

19 Asahi Shinbun1994/8/10, p.23.

lawmaker.

In 2003, among 19 governor's elections, 11 winners were from national civil service, 6 from the Diet. Most of the elected strongly insisted the necessity for the reform of administration. Most important element of promotion for reform is, above all, the leadership over the local government. Some leaders indicate the clear vision for the policies to which local government should apply.

In general, the top-down style seems to be much more desirable than the bottom-up one but too excessive top-down leadership sometimes causes distrust by employees.

With the emergence of the reformist governors, the cases which governor's right hands are appointed to the senior posts have been increased. The spoils system is not the exception in Japan any more.

Governor Ishihara in Tokyo is sometimes regarded as one of the candidates of the future prime ministers in Japan. He appointed Hamauzu as vice governor in 2000. Hamauzu had been the private secretary of Ishihara for nearly 30 years before appointed. In 1999, Ishihara submitted the plan for the approval of appointment but denied by the assembly and in the next trial, succeeded.

In Miyagi, the then governor Asano submitted the plan for the approval of appointment of Tajima, who was known as his right hand, as vice governor twice but failed receiving severe opposition by not a few prefectural assembly members.

In Kanagawa, after 10 days from election victory, Matsuzawa, former lower house member, selected two right hands to senior officials. This recruitment introduced strong resistance by Kanagawa prefectural assembly and it rejected the proposal of vice governor approval.

In case of city, the spoils system has not also become unusual. In Yokohama, mayor Nakata, who is famous for his reformist attitude, appointed Ms. Maeda as vice mayor in 2003. She has been colleague of Nakata since they joined Matsushita-seikei-juku, which is famous for training for future politicians.

In Fukuoka, mayor Yamazaki appointed Yamamo, who was mayor's junior in their high school and university, days, as vice

mayor and in Imari, mayor Tsukabe appointed Maeda, who was mayor's classmate in their high school days, as vice mayor.

Most of governors and mayors who recruit senior officials from outside local government have the background of national lawmaker, national civil servant or private sector. They don't have enough close staff inside. The recruitment from outside has two aspects, that is, merit and demerit. This kind of recruitment sometimes gives good stimulus for officials who are familiar with fellow feeling inside local government. On the other hand, this might cause demoralization of staff.

9. 2 Several Proposals

9. 2. 1 The limitation of the number of term

The limitation of the number of term has been discussed since 1950's. The purpose of limitation is to avoid the misuse of governor and mayor who has huge administrative and political authority. Multi elected leaders seem to be more vulnerable to corruption but as the data of mayors show long regime doesn't always cause corruption.

As the fact that the incumbent failed to be elected four consecutive times in Kawasaki and Yokohama indicates, the long served incumbent governor and mayor has more difficulty in reelected than before.

Some are for the limitation, others are against. If running for third term is prohibited as American President, about 40% of incumbent mayors have to retire at once. In my opinion, if term limit is necessitated, the prohibition of running for fourth term seems to be rational from the viewpoint of reality.

9. 2. 2 Involvement of public works

Among 53 cases in which mayors were arrested, 33 were in connection with public works or approval of some authority. From this fact, professor Igarashi of Hosei University insists, that governor and mayor should be excluded from the procedure of public work tendering²⁰.

The reform of tendering procedure seems to be prominent

solution for avoiding corruption. For example, if perfectly open competing tendering is obliged to local government's one which the scale of price exceeds certain amount and the company which offered the lowest price wins, corruption by governor and mayor will be reduced drastically because construction companies which want to win tendering don't have to contact with the top of local government any more..

However, this is not perfect. Besides, the side work of governor and mayor in relation with local government work should be more severely restricted. The present framework of this restriction is limited to the said person. The spouse, children, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and at least within relations in second degree should be added to the list of the limitation.

9.2.3 Election and Recall

The violation of election act is also serious. This issue should be considered with not only governor and mayor but also national and local lawmaker. Once someone receives guilty as for the violation of election act, he or she can't stand for the same election in which he or she receives guilty at least for five years. However, in case of different election, he or she can stand for.

For example, former Wakayama city mayor, Tabita, who received guilty for governor election, won mayoral race the next year. From the voters' viewpoint, the fact that the person who committed crime of the violation of election act can stand for another election is odd. Such person should be restricted to stand for any election.

The bribery happens for the sake of not only candidates but also voters. Compared the penalty of candidate with that of voter, the gap is not huge but the reality is different. Most of voters who receive guilty have to pay around 100,000 yen as fine. It seems to me that voters who receive money from candidate should compensate much more. The upper level of fine should be raised

and the suspension of citizenship should be lengthened.

The position of governor and mayor is regarded as local president and it is natural that the condition of recall be strictly limited. On the other hand, the implication of recall is limited to small city, town and village. In case of large cities, the turnout remains 30 to 40% in general and it is almost impossible to collect one third of signatures of all voters, which is the lower limit for the condition of recall.

Large cities have much more authority than ordinal cities. To avoid the misuse of it, the condition of recall should be loosen in case of them²¹.

9.2.4 Check and Balance

In the presidential system, real power tends to be much more inclined to the executive organ. To avoid such imbalance, the present system guarantees check and balance mechanism,

If a governor or mayor cannot reach a compromise with the assembly on an issue sharply dividing them, the assembly can declare a vote of no confidence. To do so, a two-thirds quorum is needed and at least three-quarters of those present must support the motion. Once this is agreed, as a countermeasure, the governor or mayor is entitled to dissolve the assembly and call for a local election to resolve the matter. If there is no dissolution order within ten days of the vote of no confidence, the governor or mayor must resign.

However if the assembly passes a further vote of no confidence at its first meeting subsequent to an election, dissolution is no longer possible and the governor or mayor must step down after being notified of the vote. On the other hand, governors and mayors have the right to veto any decision made by the assembly and demand that it be reconsidered.

In reality, most of real checks are conducted under the

21 In Poland, the condition of dissolution of local assembly is one tenth of signatures of all voters.

surface and disapproval or amendment of budget plan is generally regarded as the second severest issue for governor and mayor. Most of assemblies tend to make most use of the discussion of budget as the best card. The number of the action of no confidence remains less than 10 per year among more than 3,000 local governments. These happen when governor or mayor is severely criticized by the doubt of corruption or abuse of authority and loses confidence of the assembly.

I think that making check and balance mechanism more effectively is useless because even if institutional condition of check and balance is changed it will not give any effect on the real activity of check by assembly.

9. 3 Conclusion

The 28th Chiho-Seido-Chousakai reported the introduction of regional government which will abolish the present prefecture and reorganize into around ten units including delegation of most of authority conducted by the local branches of central government to Prime Minister Koizumi. The realization of regional government is unclear but in the near future, some reformist governor or mayor might be elected to the head of regional government. Moreover, like American state governor and German state prime minister, from the top of regional government, some might reach the top of central government, that is, the post of Prime Minister.

From the viewpoint of political ladders, the position of the head of local government will be taken into consideration much more importantly by politicians. A second and third Hosokawas will be trained through local politics.

Sound local politics depends on the will of local residents. Most important is the aggressive concern of them toward local issues. To grasp their concern, the role and responsibility of local politicians, above all, governors and mayors has been much more significant than before. I hope they will make a good fight for the sound improvement of local autonomy.