

An Open Letter to Japanese Anti-war Activists on China

March 16, 2003

Dear K. K. and other concerned Japanese citizens,

I could hardly resist rejecting your request to write about recent Chinese "intellectual" anti-war "movement" because it puts me on a position to judge my fellow citizens' action. While all my writings are for public, if possible, I hope I could avoid offending anyone. However, I decided to take the risk of disappointing you and some concerned Japanese citizens to write this letter because the current issue of peace or war is so important to all of us. Besides, I regard you as a comrade after I know your life and your determination to the world peace movement. [1]

I received Mr. H. and other Chinese fellow's emails for their statement draft in the early February. I suggested remove the part criticizing America's other sides which are irrelevant to this time's war crime. The logic, that because America is devil so it cannot attack Iraq, is not persuasive. Otherwise, Washington can claim: because France is outdated "Old Europe", and China is not a democracy, so their stance against war is not worth to appreciate. The statement should focus on the internationally illegal war per se. Unfortunately, it seems that what they wanted was just a resentment announcement.

Since the PRC governmental official stance is against America's war, there is little political meaning to sign an anti-war statement in China. Instead, I asked and suggested them participate or even organize anti-war rally in Beijing on February 15 with the world peace rally.[2] They did not answer me. I know they could not do so because that would have the risk offending the current Beijing regime. When I met Mr. H. in San Jose in 2001, I expressed that there is little value for people in China to criticize America or for people in American to criticize China. He replied: we know China is also corrupt, maybe worse than the U.S., but we don't want to lose our freedom. The point here is: if you don't want to lose something, what is the worth of your writing? There are many who have lost their freedom by criticizing their own government, in China and the world. I would suggest concerned citizens read their writings.

In fact, some in the so-called "New Left" Chinese "intellectual" circle fully enjoyed freedom provided from both America (MIT, Yale, Chicago) or America's subjects (Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore's universities) and China, and some of them support the Beijing regime to crack down the 1989 Tiananmen democratic movement. From my personal political experience of execution by the world's regimes (Beijing, Tokyo or Washington), it is clear that this kind of "movement" is under the regime's control. Under current Chinese political situation when any independent writer can be arbitrarily deprived of his/her PRC citizenship, even millions' signature agreeing the government's stance is not worthy of a review.

In current China, There is a movement of democratization (for example, Dr. Wang Bingzhang was sentenced life-time just in the last February); there is unorganized worker's movement for better livelihood; there is also a movement of Falun Gong (I disagree to its political tendency, though), but this time's petty anti-war statement has nothing to be excited for concerned citizens all over the world.

Rather than anticipating meaningless activities in China, I place my hope to American and Japanese people's direct actions in their own countries.

Now you should understand why you disagree with many overseas Chinese: because the American and Japanese politics is so reactionary that most overseas Chinese with political consciousness are deteriorated by the environment they are living in. I even don't want to point out the fact that most "famous democratic activists" receive their earning or finance from Washington, Tokyo or Taipei. There is no disappointment from this "liberal intellectual" circle because we simply should not have any expectation from them.

That said, I am never a pessimist. Recently, I began to be involved more in the American system (especially at local level) and I find a rebelling or revolutionary movement inside the corrupt political institution.[3] Indeed, when I watch so many youth and children joining to various peace rallies and democratic activities, I see a brighter future of our world.

Respectfully,

Jing Zhao

[1] I copy some of K. K.'s brief self-introduction and requests:

I graduated Tokyo University in 1971. I became a journalist of Otuki-shoten, the famous publisher of Marx, Engels, and Lenin's Collected Works). I worked there for 10 years. I became a lawyer in 1988. In 1995 a rape incident by US soldiers happened in Okinawa. So I became a member of lawyer team to support the struggles of antiwar landowners in Okinawa.

I decided to use the rest of my life for Okinawa and peace movement. From 2001 April to 2002 March, I was a visiting researcher of Harvard's Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies. I met many Chinese there, but I found that there is huge difference between me and them. So I decided to study Chinese Language. I came to Beijing last September.

I found the Chinese people peace statement (A Statement Opposing U.S. War on Iraq) from Internet. I translated and introduced the statement to my Japanese friends.

And now, I have a few questions. 1) How do you think about this statement and this new peace movement? 2) What is the social and historical background of this statement and this new peace movement? 3) How do you think about the future of this statement and this new peace movement? Will the tragedy of Tiananmen Incident repeat again?

[2] As a member of San Jose Peace Center and Labor Party, I participate these rallies and other activities in the U.S.

[3] There are more and more encouraging news even from the main stream media. For example, Reuters reported "U.S. Diplomat Resigns Over Iraq War Plans" (Mar 11) - A U.S. diplomat resigned from government service on Monday in protest of President Bush's preparations to attack Iraq, the second to do so in less than a month.

John H. Brown, who joined the U.S. diplomatic corps in 1981 and served in London, Prague, Krakow, Kiev, Belgrade and Moscow, said in a letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell made available to the media: "I cannot in good conscience support President Bush's war plans against Iraq. "Throughout the globe the United States is becoming associated with the unjustified use of force. The president's disregard for views in other nations, borne out by his neglect of public diplomacy, is giving birth to an anti-American century," the diplomat added.

A senior U.S. diplomat based in Athens, political counselor John Brady Kiesling, 45, resigned in protest at the Bush administration's policy on Iraq last month.