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Commemorative speech on the 90th anniversary
of the founding of the JCP

Endeavor toward Social Change and the Japanese Communist Party

- Let us build a bigger and stronger party
by learning from its 90 year history

Japanese Communist Party Chair
Shii Kazuo
July 18, 2012

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Good evening to everyone in the hall and to those viewing the live internet broadcast. I am Shii Kazuo. It is my great pleasure to have so many of you coming to this venue in spite of intense heat outside.

At the outset, I extend my deepest condolences to all the people who lost loved ones due to the torrential rains that recently hit Kyushu and express my sincere sympathies to the people still suffering from the disaster. The JCP calls on the government to take all necessary measures to implement relief and restoration operations and is determined to do the utmost in supporting disaster victims.

Today I will talk about the endeavor to change society and the JCP. In the present Japanese society and in the efforts to transform society, what kind of mission does the JCP have and what kind of role does it play? How significant is it to build a bigger and stronger JCP? This is the subject of my speech to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the JCP.

1. JCP's Founding Spirit Embodied in Relief Efforts in Quake-hit Areas

First is that the JCP is a party whose founding spirit is “to relieve people’s hardships and defend their safety.”

Nearly one year and four months has passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami struck. In the disaster-stricken Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima prefectures, party members and local organizations have been

working earnestly to provide relief and assist in reconstruction incorporating the JCP's founding spirit. I will give you two examples.

Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture-the JCP Branches Evolving into Reconstruction Hubs

The first is about an effort of the Tobu District Committee of Miyagi Prefecture, covering the area around Ishinomaki City, which suffered the heaviest casualties. In this district, many party members lost members of their families, friends, and their homes and workplaces. Nevertheless, the party rose up to organize on-the-spot relief efforts right after the disaster. To support their activities, a total of 8,000 plus volunteers have been sent by the party from all over the country to this district alone, delivering food and relief supplies to 32,000 victims there. The JCP's devotion to the relief effort by taking up residents' immediate needs and sharing in their grief and anxiety made more and more local residents to trust and appreciate the JCP, with many saying, "The JCP is the only party that came to our help during the hardest time."

As a result, in the Miyagi prefectural assembly elections held in November 2011, a JCP candidate won in the five-member Ishinomaki-Oshika constituency for the first time, collecting the third largest amount of votes. Encouraged by this victory, this district committee has been vigorously recruiting new party members under the conviction that appropriate reconstruction requires a stronger JCP. To date, 114 new members have joined in the party, expressing their resolve, saying, "Even as small as a grain of rice, I want to help somebody," or "What I learned from the disaster is the need to work to help others. The JCP is the only party where I can realize my wish." Already, five JCP local branches have been newly established in temporary housing facilities. These branches frequently held meetings to discuss housing and reconstruction issues. With this, a campaign to demand public housing for disaster victims is gaining strength. We are proud that the JCP and the JCP local branches have become hubs for reconstruction.

Efforts Led by the JCP Fukushima Prefectural Assembly Members - Amid the Worst Nuclear Meltdown Disaster

The second is the efforts being made by the JCP Fukushima prefectural

assembly members and the JCP local bodies. In Fukushima, the damage caused by the nuclear meltdown disaster continues to spread, even though the government issued a declaration that the nuclear accident was under control. There are still 100,000 evacuees within Fukushima prefecture and 62,000 outside the prefecture. Those evacuees are separated from family members and their local communities are broken up. Their hardship has no end in sight. The government's "accident under control" declaration contributed to a decrease in measures to help victims and provide compensation for damages, ignoring the reality on the ground. People in Fukushima are deeply resenting this irresponsibility.

Against such heavy odds, the JCP in Fukushima is engaged in various efforts to help disaster-hit victims, led by the 5 prefectoral assembly members that increased from three in the election held in November last year. As one of the major campaign promises in the election, the JCP demanded that the government provide "free medical services to all children 18 years old and younger." As an increased number of families with children are moving out of Fukushima Prefecture due to the fear of radiation health risks, the JCP prefectoral assembly members repeatedly urged the Fukushima prefectoral government to introduce this measure under its own initiative if the central government did not do it. Finally, the governor announced that the prefecture will provide free medical services for children from its own budget, which will start from this October in Fukushima Prefecture.

The JCP in Fukushima has been calling for the decommissioning of all 10 reactors in Fukushima since immediately after the accident, together with prefectoral residents. Reflecting this demand, when the Fukushima prefectoral government announced its vision for reconstruction in July last year, "communities without relying on nuclear energy" was envisioned. In addition, a petition calling for the decommissioning of the 10 reactors submitted by the New Japan Women's Association to the assembly was subsequently adopted by consensus, joined by the Liberal Democratic Party assembly members at the last moment. After the election, the five JCP prefectoral assembly members met the Fukushima governor to call on the government to decommission all 10 nuclear reactors in the prefecture. The Fukushima governor at a press conference on the next day announced that the Fukushima prefectoral government will include in a prefectoral recovery program a demand that all 10 reactors be decommissioned by the

central government and the Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO). In this way, creating a prefecture without nuclear power plants is now the firm resolve of the clear majority of Fukushima residents.

I strongly urge the government to take the Fukushima resolution seriously and make a political decision to create a Japan free of nuclear power plants. The government is also obliged to support all the Fukushima people equally without any discrimination. Whether those who evacuated from the nuclear evacuation zone and aspire to return home or those who want to settle down in the place to which they have evacuated, or those who voluntarily moved out of Fukushima due to fears of long-term radiation exposure, or those who decided to stay despite being apprehensive about the health risk, they are all victims and our fellow country folk. I strongly demand that the government support them in an equitable manner.

Two Appeals to Promote Reconstruction and Recovery

Reconstruction and recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami and the nuclear meltdown crisis will require a long-term effort. Let me make two suggestions here to promote reconstruction.

First, we have to continue to strengthen fund-raising activities and the party's volunteer activities to help reconstruct the affected areas. The amount of donations entrusted to the JCP for disaster relief is now more than 1 billion yen. The total number of volunteers from across the country continues to increase this year and has exceeded 28,000. Volunteers, including young people went to the disaster-struck areas, hold outdoor markets, bring food and relief supplies to each house, listen to what the residents want, hold cultural events, and remove mud and debris from houses and fields. I strongly appeal for the continuation and expansion of such fund-raising and volunteer activities.

Second, I sincerely call on the rapidly growing movement against nuclear power plants to intensify efforts to support all the victims of the Fukushima nuclear crisis and to help in recovery efforts in Fukushima. This should be an important pillar of the movement along with a demand for the total shutdown of all nuclear power plants in Japan. Since the end of the last war, the movement against A and H bombs has developed with the goal of a total ban on nuclear weapons as well as support for A-bomb survivors

(Hibakusha). Here is an important lesson of history. I hope that the movement to create a Japan without nuclear power plants will further develop by fostering a deeper understanding of Fukushima residents' on-going suffering. The JCP is also determined to play a part in supporting the victims of the Fukushima nuclear crisis and promoting reconstruction there.

2. JCP's Three Roles in Promoting Social Change

Next, I would like to talk about what kind of roles the JCP will play in the endeavor to promote progressive social change.

We understand that what Japan currently needs is a democratic revolution to overcome the harmful old political framework based on the two pillars of "subordination to the U.S. government" and the "tight control by business circles" and promote the Japanese people as the "key players of society." We also aim to further advance toward socialism/communism where truly equal and free human relationships will prevail.

Needless to say, the driving force or the main actor in this democratic change will be the Japanese people with whom sovereignty resides. The JCP will pursue social change step by step through what we call a democratically-inspired "majority revolution" that will be undertaken with the participation of the majority of the public.

So what is the raison d'être of the JCP? The JCP imposes the following three tasks on itself to help promote participation by the majority of the public in the endeavor for social change.

Showing Farsightedness by Presenting a Long-term Vision

Our first role is to show farsightedness by presenting to the public a vision for both the immediate and long-term future based on scientific analysis.

*Economic proposal-pointing to a way other than
consumption tax increase*

For example, concerning the issue of consumption tax increase and the financial crisis, which party has been showing a real vision to the general

public?

The JCP has pointed out that if the consumption tax is increased through the collusion of the DPJ, the LDP, and the Komei Party, it will put the Japanese economy into a downward spiral, where the public suffer from an unbearable tax burden and the public finances goes towards bankruptcy.

In its economic proposal released in February, the JCP stressed that there are ways other than implementing a consumption tax increase. Japan can come out of the crisis in public finances with improved social welfare programs without relying on a consumption tax increase if we implement the following two-pillar reforms simultaneously: one, the elimination of wasteful expenditures plus a tax reform based on the ability-to-pay principle - a reform requiring large corporations and the rich to pay their fair share in taxes. We are confident that this is the way to break the current impasse and provide the public with a bright prospect and a hope to a better future; two, there is an important difference between the argument that says “there is something we should do before a consumption tax increase,” and our proposal on ways other than consumption tax increase. I cannot stress this point enough. Frankly speaking, the former argument does not brighten up future prospects.

According to this argument, we cannot avoid an increase in the consumption tax after the implementation of “painful reforms,” such as cuts in the number of public workers and their salaries, and a reduction in the number of proportional representation seats in the House of Representatives-measures that will destroy both people’s livelihood and any remains of democracy. The Your Party, claiming to be a pioneer in advocating these policies, insists on reducing social security expenditures by 20 % or six trillion yen in total. An implementation of such absurd policies will completely destroy the basis of health care, nursing care, and the national pension system.

Only when we convince the Japanese public that there are ways other than imposing a consumption tax increase, can they be convinced to confidently take up the struggle against it. By showing such “foresight,” we will fight against this massive tax increase. Let us work together in this endeavor.

*Diplomatic vision-questioning the very necessity of
Japan-U.S. Security Treaty*

Which party is presenting the general public with a real vision to solve the issue of U.S. military bases in Japan?

Presently at issue is the deployment of the tilt-rotor aircraft Ospreys to the U.S. Futenma Air Station in Okinawa. All over the nation, anger has been mounting against deployment of the dangerous aircraft nicknamed as the “widow maker” after a series of crashes. Okinawans have decided that they will hold a prefectural-wide protest rally. The public opposition has been also growing in other places on mainland Japan where the U.S. military plans to conduct low-altitude flight training exercises of the Osprey.

However, the Japanese and U.S. governments are pushing ahead with the deployment under the pretext that it is their “right” vested under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. The more they try to justify the deployment in the name of the security treaty, the more this security treaty itself will be called into question. In an editorial, the Ryukyu Shimpō newspaper of Okinawa stated, “The protest rally against the Osprey deployment is a warning of the collapse of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.” The Ehime Shimbun of Ehime Prefecture wrote in its editorial, “Stop deploying the Ospreys and take this opportunity to review the security treaty.”

I recently visited the prime minister’s official residence, requesting that the government propose to the United States to cancel the deployment of the Ospreys to Japan. I told Chief Cabinet Secretary Fujimura Osamu that if the government uses the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty as an excuse for enforcing the deployment, the public will move to demand the scrapping of the treaty. He admitted, “That may be true.” It was totally inappropriate for him to speak as if he was a bystander without any say in policy decisions. Let us demand the Japanese and U.S. governments to cancel the Osprey deployment to Japan.

In this regard, I feel a significant change in Japan’s political climate. Previously on TV political debate programs, whenever I called for the abrogation of the security treaty, other participants looked at me as if I were from another planet, coming up with something absurd. Today, however, the question whether the security treaty should continue or not is taken

seriously.

The JCP “diplomatic vision” spells out a “new horizon that would be opened up if and when Japan abrogates the Security Treaty with the United States.” Only when we commit ourselves to abrogating the security treaty, can we get an unobstructed view of how to solve the issue of U.S. military bases in Japan, establish peace and security both in East Asia and Japan, and regain Japan’s economic sovereignty. By gaining majority public support of this vision, let us open up the path to a truly independent and peaceful Japan where Article 9 of the Constitution is vigorously championed and enforced.

Being Indomitable-Never Yielding to Persecution, Attack or Interference

Present-day indomitability-steadfast struggle against mainstream media's influence to win support of public

Our second role is to demonstrate “indomitability” by unyieldingly striving to achieve various tasks without bowing to any persecution, attack, or interference.

What does it mean to be indomitable in the efforts to change the present-day society?

Unlike the period of time before and during World War II, today we don’t need to worry about brutal suppression or savage imprisonment by the Special Political Police. However, we are faced by a task that may be far more difficult and requires much more persistence than in the prewar period. We have to win a majority of the public to support our vision of social change by overcoming the enormous and adverse influence of Japan’s mass media that has become monstrously large. In most cases, the mainstream media have been incorporated into the ruling circles, acting as promoters of misrule while abandoning their rightful role as watchdogs of government conduct.

Look at how aggressively the media giants have been promoting a consumption tax raise, Japan’s participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, and the government’s decision to resume operations of nuclear power plants. Within a month before the House of

Representatives passed a bill to raise the consumption tax (in August 2012), the Yomiuri Shimbun ran 16 editorials and the Asahi Shimbun carried 14 to promote the consumption tax increase. Both papers published such deplorable editorials once every two days. They completely ignored opinion polls conducted by themselves, which revealed that 50 to 60 % of the public were against a consumption tax hike. Even though they had whipped up support for the bill, once it was passed at the House of Representatives, they started to breathe freely, by saying, “Nobody doubts the fact that the consumption tax increase goes against the DPJ’s election promise (Asahi Simbun), “Violating its own election pledge is an affront to voters (Nikkei Shimbun).” But who in the world encouraged the DPJ to break its promise in the first place?

Akahata described as “impartial”

In this media environment, we need to wage a steadfast struggle in the fields of politics, ideas, and society in order to mobilize a majority of the public to join in the endeavor to change society in a progressive direction. In addition to forging a strong tie with the public and advancing mass movements based on various pressing demands, we have to work hard to increase the readership of Akahata - a source of information that tells the truth often hidden by the media giants. Only such steadfast efforts can pave the way to creating a new Japan based on progressive values.

I feel that we now have favorable conditions to realize that. Recently, our party headquarters has been receiving more than 100 requests per month for subscriptions to the Akahata newspaper. This is a new high. A woman in Osaka Prefecture sent us a request for subscription, writing, “When I read the Akahata articles on the website, I felt this newspaper is impartial and fulfilling the functions of genuine journalism.” I am indeed pleased to hear that Akahata is valued by its impartiality contrary to the commonly held misunderstanding that it is “biased.” As distrust and criticism against the mass media is growing among the public, the Akahata is attracting fresh interest and attention. Encouraged by this new development, we will keep on with our efforts to increase the readership of this alternative information source. I sincerely ask for your support and participation in this endeavor.

Working at the Grassroots Level - Forging Close Ties with the Public

“Extensive grassroots power” built by the party’s nation-wide efforts

The third role is to make every effort to work at the grassroots level, forging close ties with the public, organizing popular movements, and creating a better future for all.

The JCP has 318,000 members belonging to more than 20,000 branches that are organized in workplaces, communities, and campuses. There are 2,743 local assembly members and 1.3 million “Akahata” readers throughout Japan. The JCP has branches in 96.1% of 1,789 existing municipalities across the country and local assembly members elected in 77.8% of all the municipalities, who are striving to realize various people’s demands at the grassroots level. As for other parties, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has local assembly members in 21.8% of the all municipalities in the nation, the Democratic Party (DPJ) in 21.9%, the New Komei Party in 65.6%, and the Social Democratic Party in 14.1%.

Because of the municipality mergers promoted by the central government, the total number of local assembly seats have been reduced to 56% of that of 10 years ago, which resulted in a decline in the number of JCP local assembly members. However, the JCP’s share of seats has increased from 7.05% to 7.82% during the same decade. We have maintained our grassroots strength by resisting the fierce attempt to establish a two-party system. I thank all the support we got from the public and the efforts made by all the members.

Activities to protect lives and health of citizens from radioactive contamination

Various activities have been organized across the nation to protect the lives and health of citizens from radioactive contamination spread by the nuclear meltdown disaster. The JCP has carried out activities to measure radiation levels and decontaminate at approximately 40,000 locations in 334 municipalities and administrative words of 26 prefectures in total.

In Tokyo, the JCP metropolitan assembly members measured radiation

levels in 128 locations all over Tokyo. The result compelled the Tokyo metropolitan government to start measuring radiation on its own. In all of the 49 wards and cities, and the 7 towns and villages of Tokyo, the JCP local assembly members have already carried out activities to measure radiation levels in over ten thousands locations in cooperation with the party branches there, which encouraged the local governments to conduct clean-ups. Cooperation has been advanced with groups of young parents to protect children from radiation. One mother taking part in these groups found a JCP flyer dropped in her home letter box and thought “it’s a god-sent gift.” That was how the cooperation started. The Tokyo metropolitan government had been reluctant to decontaminate hot-spots that were found in various locations of Tokyo. But when the JCP metropolitan assembly members found that the radiation levels in Mizumoto Metropolitan Park exceeded the minimum safety standards, the metropolitan government was forced to take steps for decontamination. This is how grassroots power can move politics.

Are there any other parties that take such initiatives? Our activities show our proud grassroots strength as well as the party’s founding spirit to reduce people’s hardships and defend people’s safety.

Develop Joint Struggles Based on Single Demands and Form a New United Front to Change Japan

Unprecedented growth of joint struggles based on single demands in various fields.

We are seeing an unprecedented growth of joint struggles including opposition to a consumption tax hike, nuclear power plants, the TPP(Trans-Pacific Partnership) and U.S. military bases, overcoming political differences among participants.

Cooperation even with people with politically conservative views has widely advanced. Struggles against the TPP with JA (Japan Agricultural Cooperatives), medical associations, and construction industries have been developed.

On the occasion of the 90th anniversary of its founding, I would like to announce here that we have received congratulatory messages from all of

the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations, the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations, and the National Federation of Forest Owners' Cooperative Associations, for the first time in the 90 year history of the party. I would like to extend my appreciation to all who sent us messages of congratulations.

Many citizens have started to actually take to the streets to raise their concerns. As for the movement against nuclear power generation, weekly protests against the restarting of nuclear reactors in front of the official residence of the Prime Minister have developed into an unprecedented scale with 100,000-200,000 participants attending and, the day before yesterday (on July 16), a rally named the “100 Thousand People’s Rally to Say Good-bye to Nuclear Power Plants” ended in a huge success with 170,000 participants. These are historical developments that are comparable to the struggle against the revision of the Japan-US security treaty in 1960 when citizens took to the streets in huge numbers to protest.

Sympathy and trust toward JCP's attitude

In the groundswell of people’s joint struggles, the JCP consistently holds the sincere attitude to help develop each movement while giving recognition to the common ground shared among the participants in each movement. I’m often invited to rallies opposing the TPP, but I refrain from talking about the consumption tax there due to the need to focus.

At the same time, we have been presenting a long-term vision and persevering through many obstacles and difficulties and working together with people at the grassroots level. Thus, we have made every effort by exhibiting farsightedness, indomitability, and grassroots strength. Such an attitude is winning the sympathy and trust of a greater number of people.

I recently attended a roundtable meeting on economic issues organized by the JCP Hokkaido prefectoral committee. Mr. OKUNO Iwao, president of the medical and welfare federation of JA Hokkaido, said, “It is the LDP that reduced the nation’s food self-sufficiency rate to 39%. It is the DPJ that will reduce the self-sufficiency rate to 13% by joining the TPP. It is only the JCP that opposes the TPP and consistently defends Japan’s agriculture. I would like to express my deep appreciation and respect.” This was a great encouragement to us to continue on our path.

The Akahata started to cover the weekly protests against nuclear power plants in front of the Prime Minister's office since its early stages when there were several hundred participants, continuously carrying articles that reflected their opinions. This resulted in increased confidence in the Akahata. We received the following tweet about the front page of the Akahata on the June 30th, "Akahata gave the biggest coverage on yesterday's protest in front of the PM's office. I spread it open on the train so that people around me could see. This is what everyone should know to become informed citizens." This was also a highly encouraging message to us to continue on our path.

Nowadays, single-issue coalitions have started to overlap each other and see the connections, developing into multi-tiered collaborations. We will make utmost efforts to help deepen solidarity among single-issue coalitions so that eventually they develop into a new kind of united front with an aim for changing Japan in a progressive direction. I would like to stress this determination.

3. Learn from History of Party Building to Establish a Bigger and Stronger Party.

To promote social change in Japan, it is decisively important to build a bigger and stronger JCP that plays important roles to exercise "farsightedness," "indomitability," and "grassroots strength." Taking this occasion, I want to look back on our party's history to learn from our predecessors' hard-fought struggles in party building.

Before and during WWII: The role of "Sekki (Akahata)" and activities to support it in the dark era of suppression

Firm Stand of "Sekki" - Pride in the History of Japan's journalism

The Japanese Communist Party bravely rose against the oppressive reign of the Emperor (Tenno) absolutism since the party's foundation in 1922, proudly carrying the banner for popular sovereignty and pacifism. As a result, it was outlawed and harshly repressed. Under such circumstances, there was a journal that unwaveringly published our party's opinions

without fearing any restriction imposed by the Tennoist regime. It was the party's newspaper "*Sekki* (*Red flag*)". The present "Akahata" was called "*Sekki*" before and during WWII. The *Sekki*'s inaugural issue came out on April 1, 1928, through which the JCP made its first appearance in public. From then till February 1935, the *Sekki*'s seven-year publication in spite of repeated suspensions due to crackdowns left a glorious footprint in history.

The Manchurian Incident of September 1931 marked the beginning of the war of aggression against China. For months leading up to the incidents, the *Sekki* warned against imminent aggression being prepared by the Japanese imperialist regime with such headlines as "Resist war preparation by Japanese imperialism!" and "Do not send a single soldier to war!" As the war broke out, it exposed the true character of the war as "a predatory war aimed at territorial acquisition" and continued to argue for peace, opposing the war. All major newspapers rushed to support and glorify the war in unison. They were filled with bellicose articles in tune with the military slogan, "Defend Manchuria and Mongolia as a lifeline of the Empire." The *Sekki* alone continued to hoist the banner of peace and opposition to war among the warmongering mass media. It points to only *Sekki*'s honor, but also should be the pride in the history of Japanese journalism.

How the Sekki was published clandestinely

Carrying a copy of the banned *Sekki* meant risking arrest and imprisonment. No way you could distribute it in public. Its printing and distribution was also under severe suppression. Starting as a mimeographed edition, the *Sekki* was first published in a letterpress printing from April 1932. This tabloid sized newspaper was coming out every 3 to 5 days with 6 to 8 pages. The maximum circulation was about 7,000 copies. I brought with me a copy of the first issue of the letter-printed *Sekki*. This is one of the precious two copies remaining in our headquarters.

Publishing 7,000 copies risking arrest and imprisonment was a significant task. In addition, every copy was circulated among numerous readers until it was worn into tatters. Its influence was estimated to have spread to tens of thousands people. Compared to the Yomiuri Shimbun's 300,000 readership in 1932, that was quite an achievement by our predecessors at that time.

How did they accomplish this? Author Tezuka Hidetaka described it in his

detailed report entitled “*Sekki*’s Underground Printing Presses.” An underground printing press was not necessarily a clandestine endeavor built secretly in a basement, but actually meant the use of an ordinary printing shop in a town. If the whole process was done in one printing shop, one police crackdown might have dealt a fatal blow to publishing *Sekki*. To avoid such a fate, the printing process was divided into four stages. The party’s printing staff members found reliable small workshops in town and separately ordered these jobs, such as setting up type, making paper-mâché molds, running melted metal into the molds, and printing.

They were extremely careful about avoiding crackdowns especially when they moved the printing material from one stage to the next. One of the printing staff members, Hayashida Shigeo wrote a vivid memoir as follows:

“As soon as I started as a staff member of the Party’s printing section, I made up several secret code words. We needed language that could be used in tea rooms and other meeting points without being suspected. After some exploration, we decided to pose as tailors. A ‘manuscript’ was called an ‘order form,’ ‘layout’ was ‘measurement,’ ‘form’ was ‘cut,’ ‘proofreading’ was ‘fitting,’ ‘printing’ was ‘stitching,’ ‘printing paper’ was ‘cloth,’ ‘newspaper’ was ‘jacket’, ‘flyer’ was ‘handkerchief,’ and so on.”

For example, two men might be talking at a Soba noodle shop like this.
“Have you received an order form?” “Now I am doing measurement.”
“Then, let’s do the fitting the day after tomorrow, and the stitching will be
...”

The *Sekki* letterpress edition continued for a year and 9 months from April 1932 to December 1933. After that, it was coming out again on mimeographs but a crackdown in February 1935 put an end to it. During the decade after the *Sekki* disappeared, Japan’s war of aggression spread to mainland China and wider regions in Asia and the Pacific inflicting massive casualties and eventually resulting in the catastrophic defeat of Japan’s militarism. History, however, vindicated the *Sekki*’s voice calling for justice, conscience, and reason. Our predecessors’ struggle in the dark ages of militarism is still alive today.

After the War: Build a Sovereign Independent Party along the Programmatic Line

Learn from the party building efforts after the 7th Congress (1958)

Our post-war party building efforts went through many ups and downs. Today, I would like to recall the efforts made after the 7th Congress held in 1958, which laid the foundation for our party building that is ongoing to this day.

At the 7th Congress, the party unified itself by summing up the “1950 question” created by the Soviet Communist Party intervention, and adopted the line of sovereign independence. Then, the party strength was at a low ebb with a 36,000 membership and a 47,000 Akahata readership. From here, the party engaged in dauntless efforts to grow bigger and stronger. This was the start of our ongoing efforts to build a party that is deeply rooted in civil society.

The 3rd Plenum of the Central Committee (7th Congress) held in November 1958 announced the call to start a “Movement for the Establishment of Party Life and Expansion of Party Strength,” setting the standards for correct party life, such as 1) regular holding of branch meetings, 2) all party members to read the Akahata, and 3) all party dues and Akahata subscriptions to be paid fully and on time. Vice Chair Hamano recalls this period, when he was working for the party full time in Shiga Prefecture, as follows:

“Holding a party meeting was not an easy task because party members had conflicted feelings about what they went through during the ‘1950 Question.’ Those who had engaged in some activities risking their lives were undergoing a period of soul-searching. Some pointed fingers of blame at the party leadership. However, they were communists at heart. After going through lengthy discussions, the ‘communist spirit’ arose again in their minds and we got down to how to organize struggles and how to make our party bigger and stronger.”

The Central Committee 6th Plenum (7th Congress) in the summer of 1959 called for a “Double-the-Party-Strength Movement” and sent a letter to

every party member calling for actions for party expansion and consolidation. At the plenum, there were some who were against it. Those opponents who would later oppose the program and remove themselves from the party furiously argued that the party was not growing because the political line was wrong, the party would expand spontaneously if it undertook mass movements vigorously, and the party could not possibly develop unless it decided a party program. The plenum nevertheless overcame such opposition through a 13-day-long discussion.

At that time, the party's influence was growing as the nationwide movement against the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and the Miike coal mine struggle were building up. Still, the party ended up with fewer votes and a smaller share of votes in the House of Councilors election in June 1959. The party had learned the hard way that even though the mass movements and the party's influence in those movements grew, it did not lead to a good electoral performance and an organizational growth of the party. The letter was published under such circumstances.

The letter moves us even today. It made an impassioned plea that the party was too weak organizationally and must become a force that wields an active influence on actual politics, calling for doubling the party strength by the 8th Congress. It concluded by asking members to send their replies to the central committee. All the party stood up in response to the letter, with 92% of party branches sending their written responses to the central committee. The party membership doubled in all the prefectures. Thus, at the 8th Congress in 1961, the party program was successfully adopted.

The foundation was laid for our party building during this period

The first national activists' meeting in August 1960 decided that party activity must stand firmly on "two legs." This has developed into what we now call the "party activity on two wheels," meaning that the party expansion efforts must be pursued in unison with the popular struggle to realize various demands, but at the same time it must be promoted in its own right. The 4th Central Committee Plenum (8th Congress) in October 1962 made a decision to put the party organ paper at the center of party activity. The basis of our party activity was thus established during this period.

To build a stronger party, we had to overcome the opposition within. When China's Mao Tse-tung faction interfered in our party, the Mao followers ridiculed party building efforts by saying, "It is no use recruiting people by begging them to join the party. Only by bringing together those who voluntarily join the party, can we build up a truly revolutionary party." The party overcame these provocative arguments one by one.

Between the 7th Congress and the 11th Congress in 1970, the party membership grew from 36,000 to 300,000, and the Akahata readership from 47,000 to 1.8 million. This strenuous effort to expand paved the way for the JCP's rapid advance in 1970s.

Towards a Powerful Party that would Open Up a Bright Future during 21st Century

The party constitution revised at the 22nd Congress (2000)

The party building efforts faced difficulties, or even setbacks, after the agreement to cooperate between the Socialist party and the Komei Party was established in 1980 and the subsequent "all-in-the-ruling-parties" setup was created to contain any JCP advance. We are now in the midst of the campaign to make a bigger and stronger party to win the next general election by overcoming the stagnation and retreat engendered by these moves.

In this regard, the revision of the party constitution at the 20th Congress in 2000 was highly significant as a new foundation laying the basis for party building in the 21st century.

Reflecting a radically changed position of the JCP within Japanese society, the thoroughly revised constitution became easier to understand and reduced possibilities for misunderstanding. For example, we removed the long-held self-definition as the "vanguard party." The notion of "vanguard" was used to express the party's indomitability and theoretical farsightedness, which we will certainly carry on in the future. However, to avoid any misunderstanding that "vanguard" is something that stands above the society and plays only the leadership role, we decided to stop using it.

Given the spread of various single-issue coalitions and the connections

being made between them, this constitution revision is important for the party also to build rapport with the majority of the public as an equal and trustworthy partner.

“The Japanese comrade summarizes it in a beautiful expression,” writes a German colleague

The JCP’s party building efforts has also attracted international attention.

Mr. Manfred Sohn of the Left Party in Germany recently wrote an article in the party monthly magazine, taking up my speech at this year’s New Year assembly at the JCP head office. He listed the JCP characteristics as follows: i) a sovereign independent party that has a firm root in its own history, ii) a party that pursues study on its party program systematically, such as with a lecture series on the Party program and Marxist classics, and iii) thanks to these, the party can analyze its setback with a cool head in order to make a fresh advance. In addition, he took up the JCP’s ongoing Movement to Expand Party Strength, which the JCP is engaged in, from the standpoint that whether the JCP can “change the situation depends on its ability to expand the party membership and promote the party’s own media, as well as its party members’ exemplary role among the public.” He mentioned the last characteristic as the “most important lesson from distant Japan for us between the North Sea and the Alps.”

In the conclusion of the article, he wrote, “The Japanese comrade summed it up in a beautiful phrase, i.e. ‘we will increase party strength by practicing the 3 principles of party life (participate in branch meetings, read the daily Akahata, and pay party dues).’ When we achieve this, we will make real progress.”

We are determined to successfully build a bigger and stronger party by learning from the party building efforts in the pre-war period and the pioneering party expansion efforts after the war, in addition to meeting the expectations from faraway Germany. Here I repeat my call for your cooperation.

4. What is a Life with True Freedom and Happiness? - Call for Joining with the JCP

In conclusion, I would like to make a call on everyone who agrees with our policies and activities to join with the JCP in this 90th anniversary of its foundation, and beginning a life as a pioneer in pursuing progressive social development.

Friends, what is true freedom and true happiness for human beings? To answer this question, let me give you my favorite quotes by two of our predecessors.

First, I quote from an essay by Karl Marx, a founder of scientific socialism, entitled “Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession.” He wrote it when he was 17 years old at the time of his graduation from the gymnasium (high school). In this essay, he discussed the relations between “the welfare of mankind and our own perfection,” and concluded as follows: “Man's nature is so constituted that he can attain his own perfection only by working for the perfection, for the good, of his fellow men.... Experience acclaims as happiest the man who has made the greatest number of people happy.... If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down.”

When Marx wrote this, of course, he was not a scientific socialist yet. However, he remained faithful to the belief he held in his youth throughout his life and never bowed down to entrenched interests. He attained his “own perfection” as a great revolutionary hardened through tough struggles and personal difficulties.

Second is from a letter that Miyamoto Kenji who served as the chairman of JCP after WWII wrote to Miyamoto Yuriko when he was in prison. The letter was dated October 10, 1944, when he was 35 years old:

“A life as a voyager firmly guided by a compass, not as a helpless drifter, is certainly joyous and worth living, no matter how arduous it may be. Being adrift as an impulsive wanderer is not something we call a life. Blessed is a seafarer who is deprived of his oars and navigational instruments by a storm and yet dares to continue his voyage with the help of the stars in the sky. Only such a voyager's life is anointed with scented oil, whose radiance will

fill his life with vigor and integrity or poetry and truth, things that make human life distinct from that of an animal.”

I first heard this passage in the fall of 1974, when I was a university sophomore, in the speech made by Fuwa Testuzo at the Democratic Youth League of Japan’s study meeting in the packed Nippon Budokan Hall. Citing the Miyamoto letter, the then Secretary Head of the JCP called on the audience not to be drifters helplessly carried away by changing tides of society, but to be voyagers who confidently sails on with a reliable compass. I remember how his speech stirred my heart.

I am convinced that you will attain true freedom and happiness in your life when you work for happiness for the greatest number and live a life as a voyager with a reliable compass.

I call on you to join with the JCP and work together with us to achieve a better society in the interests of all and to seek true happiness for yourself and others. With this, I conclude my speech to celebrate this memorable day.

Viva, the 90th anniversary of the founding of the JCP!

(Akahata July 20, 2012)