

Japan : Anti-Korean Right-Wing Media Campaign. Hate Speech Activists ordered to pay 12 million yen fine

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Anti-Korean activists ordered to pay 12 million yen over hate speech demonstrations

KYOTO — The Kyoto District Court on Oct. 7 ordered anti-Korean activists to pay 12.2 million yen in damages for disrupting classes at a Korean school through a demonstration in front of the school in which they used loudspeakers to disseminate hate speech.

The court decision came after the operator of Kyoto Korean Primary School sued the « Zainichitokken o Yurusanai Shimin no Kai » (Zaitokukai), a citizens group against special rights for Koreans, and its former members, demanding 30 million yen in compensation and a ban on anti-Korean demonstrations within a radius of 200 meters from the school.

Presiding Judge Hitoshi Hashizume concluded that the group's actions, including promoting its demonstrations on the Internet, aimed to fan discrimination and hatred toward Koreans living in Japan. It is the first court decision that recognized these anti-ethnic Korean demonstrations as a form of racial discrimination banned under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The ruling discussed if freedom of expression secured under the Japanese Constitution could apply to the Zaitokukai's demonstrations from December 2009 to March 2010, during which group members delivered hate speeches using words such as « Kick Korean schools out of Japan ! » and « You guys smell like kimchi » and « These students are children of spies ! » through loudspeakers at the school in Kyoto's Minami Ward.

The ruling is hoped to prevent similar anti-Korean hate speech-fuelled rallies held mainly in Tokyo's Shin-okubo district and Osaka, and is expected to spark debate on laws and regulations against such movements.

Meanwhile, Zaitokukai's vice chairman Yasuhiro Yagi said, « We're disappointed that the legitimacy of our actions were denied. We'll decide whether or not to appeal after studying the verdict. »

Mainichi Shimbun, October 7, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131007p2a00m0na016000c.html>

Tabloids brimming with anti-Korea diatribes

For 11 consecutive days from the start of this month, every front page of the *Yukan Fuji*, a nationally circulated evening tabloid published by the *Sankei Shimbun*, was embellished with at least one negative reference to South Korea. Some headline excerpts :

« Korea blasts into 20-year-long economic panic. President Park strays from her public commitment. Samsung shares plunge again. » (Oct. 1)

« Korea's President Park makes self-destructive remark in diplomacy with Japan. » (Oct. 2)

« Korea's President Park accelerates (her) tyrannical rule. » (Oct. 3)

« List of toxic foods produced in S. Korea – insecticide found in 'fresh cucumbers' » (Oct. 4).

« Anti-Japanese radiation propaganda boomerangs on S. Korea's own marine products industries. » (Oct. 5)

« Kara breakup drama ; final curtain goes down on the Hanryu boom » (Oct. 6)

And so on.

It was gratifying to see I wasn't the only one who has taken notice of *Yukan Fuji*'s obsession. *Tokyo Shimbun* (Oct. 5) ran a story titled 'h 'Ureru' susumu gekika, fueru kenkan hodo no 'enaze' « (The reason for the advancing intensification and increasingly strong anti-Korean reporting : »It sells").

When *Tokyo Shimbun*'s reporter contacted *Yukan Fuji* for a comment, he was told, dryly, « We are dismally conveying the facts. »

« Anti-Korean stories sell better than those that report amicable ties, » explained an unnamed veteran weekly-magazine reporter. « These sentiments are supported by younger Japanese and are gradually spreading among the older generation as well. And they resonate with editors at the paper in their 30s and under. »

The key word here is *kenkan*, written with the characters *ken* (to hate or dislike) and *kan*, for *Kankoku* (the Republic of Korea). The term reportedly came into vogue from 2005 in what was to become a four-volume series of manga books by illustrator Sharin Yamano (a nom-de-plume) titled « Ken-Hanryu » (« Hating the Korean Wave »). The comics initially set out to attack TV dramas and other pop culture from Korea, collectively referred to as *Hanryu*.

« The atmosphere produced by the anti-Japanese/anti-Korean campaigns in the respective media is as bad as I have seen in monitoring the press for over three decades, » remarked Bill Brooks, a former media analyst at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo who now teaches at the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies in Washington, D.C. He described the trend as « sad and disturbing. »

« As one result, the tone and intensity against minority groups in Japan have increased dramatically, in great part because of the use of the Internet by previously marginal hate groups to link to like-minded racists who have organized hate-speech rallies and marches in Korean residential

areas. »Unless there is leadership in both countries willing to make efforts toward reconciliation and mutual understanding, the vicious cycle of distrust, hate and recrimination is likely to careen forward, toward wrecking the bilateral relationship beyond easy repair," Brooks asserted.

Yukan Fuji has appeared particularly incensed over campaigns by Korean lobbying groups in the U.S. aimed at vilifying Japan, such as by the installation last July of a 500-kg metal statue of a « comfort woman » – as wartime sex slaves were euphemistically called – in Glendale, California's Central Park.

Jumping into the fray, the *Shukan Asahi Geino* (Oct. 17) featured a six-page report on how South Korea's sports reportage is full of fabrications designed to incite readers. It cited the example of a column in the Korean newspaper JoongAng Ilbo's online version allegedly quoting baseball superstar Ichiro Suzuki as saying, after an international game in 1997, that he wasn't able to hit the pitches thrown by Korean hurlers because the balls « reeked so much of garlic they made his head swim. » (There is no evidence Suzuki made any such comment.)

Not all reporting on Korea has been negative. *Aera* (Oct. 7) examined the flareups of nationalistic sentiments at soccer games and soundly denounced the use of sports heroes for propaganda purposes. And *Flash* (Oct. 15) ran a six-page story in FAQ format about the Zainichi (Korean residents of Japan), which largely served to debunk accusations that they were exploiting token (special rights), as some right-wing groups have accused them of doing.

Even monthly magazine *Sapio*, whose October cover story was titled « South Korea can't become an advanced country, » has moderated its rhetoric somewhat. It quoted blogger Ichiro Yamamoto as saying the vitriolic « hate speech » that has characterized demonstrations by Japanese right-wing groups is undesirable, if for no other reason that « It just gives people ammunition to apply reverse logic and justify anti-Japanese behavior in Korea 'because the same type of thing is happening in Japan.' »

From Oct. 8, *Yukan Fuji* began a new series by military-affairs analyst Kazuhiko Inoue about the current state of South Korea's armed forces. Inoue noted with disdain that recently built Korean navy vessels seem to have been purposely christened with names that underscore less-than-amicable relations with Japan, such as the amphibious assault ship « Dokdo, » named after the disputed islands (called Takeshima in Japan), and « An Jung-guen, » a submarine named after the Korean patriot – or « terrorist » depending on who's talking – who assassinated Meiji Era statesman Hirobumi Ito in 1909.

Along with its bolstered naval budget, Inoue states somewhat ominously, these effectively proclaim that Korea « views Japan as one of its hypothetical enemies. »

Mark Schreiber, Special To *The Japan Times*, October 12, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/10/12/national/tabloids-brimming-with-anti-korea-diatribes/#.Ulumf1NjbRY>
