

A big political controversy surrounds the Yasukuni Shrine because since 1978, fourteen class A war criminals are among the 2.5 million people enshrined at Yasukuni. Furthermore, the visits by several Japanese prime ministers to the shrine since 1975 have been causing concerns regarding a violation of the principle of separation of church and state.

For some people, especially in the Asian countries which suffered most under past Japanese imperialism, the shrine has become a symbol for Japanese militarism and ultra-nationalism, and many are taking the prime ministers' visits as a sign that Japan's political leaders are not looking critically enough at their country's history.

Attempts to remove the war criminals from the Yasukuni Shrine have failed due to the shrine's refusal. Other discussions to solve the problem center around plans to create a currently non-existent alternative to the Yasukuni Shrine for commemorating and worshipping Japan's war dead.

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi violated the constitution when he visited a religious shrine that honors Japan's war dead, a court ruled Wednesday, but the Japanese leader vowed to keep going.

The court's decision dealt with Koizumi's first visit as prime minister in August 2001, finding he violated the ban on religious activity by the government. Koizumi has gone to the shrine three times since then.

Such trips by Japanese leaders to the Yasukuni shrine in downtown Tokyo have long angered China, South Korea and other Asian countries because of its association with Japan's wartime conquests, and Japanese courts have ruled in the past against visits by previous premiers.

Yasukuni, a Shinto shrine, honors 2.5 million Japanese who died in wars in the 19th and 20th centuries, including war criminals from World War II like wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo.

A group of 211 activists filed a lawsuit at the Fukuoka District Court alleging that Koizumi's visits to the shrine violated the constitution and caused them psychological stress.

"This is a fantastic ruling that clearly acknowledges the prime minister's visit to Yasukuni as unconstitutional," said Tsuneaki Gunjima, leader of the plaintiffs. The activists also had demanded \$200,000 in damages, but the court rejected that claim.

The ruling stated that Koizumi's visits were made in his official capacity, though government officials have argued they were private. Koizumi signed the shrine's visitors log with "Prime Minister" and arrived at the grounds in a government car.

The government did not immediately announce whether it would appeal the decision, but Junichi Ishihara, an official at the Cabinet Office, said the ruling was not legally binding. He added that

other courts have ruled that the visits were constitutional.

Koizumi dismissed the distinction between official and personal shrine visits and said he would go to Yasukuni again.

"I don't know why it violates the constitution. I go there as prime minister and as an individual," Koizumi told reporters. "I'm both a public and private person. I will continue my visits there."

Koizumi has said he makes the pilgrimages to Yasukuni out of personal conviction. He also has political reasons since the visits shore up critical support in the conservative wing of his Liberal Democratic Party.

Article 10 Section 2: Report on Tax Exemptions. Every five years the governor shall report to the legislature on the social, fiscal and economic impact of tax exemptions provided by law. The report may include recommendations by the governor on tax exemption policy or laws.

Source: Original provision, unaltered (ratified 1977, effective 1978).

On My Mind

4/15/06

While the U.S. Congress' attempt to reform immigration laws failed to pass last week, it came close, and speculation is that it will pass once Congress re-convenes. Even though its provisions would not directly affect the CNMI's immigration laws, it might behoove local legislators - and attorneys - to pay close attention nevertheless, particularly since CNMI control over its immigration may well come under attack once again in the not-too-distant future. The discussions surrounding the bill, the debate on the bill, the provisions of the bill itself all offer a wealth of ammunition to the CNMI for its position that "immigrant" labor plays a vital role in both the economy - and in society.

New York Times columnist David Brooke, for example, was quoted in a recent issue of the International Herald Tribune as saying that Hispanic immigrants 'bring back values to society.' (The same could doubtlessly also be said of immigrants of other nationalities). They work hard and their money is spent on wholesome things - including support of their parents; they have strong families and low divorce rates; their values lead to success. He said that U.S. immigrants' long term contributions more than compensate for the short term strains they may impose on schools, hospitals and the like.

He also noted that women from Mexico, for example, have bigger healthier babies because their family and social networks support them and remind them what to eat and do.

Local leaders, legislators and attorneys might also want to take a close look at those provisions of the federal bill that deal with the eventual integration of illegal immigrants into the U.S. As it stands, the bill provides that illegal immigrants in the U.S. five years or more would be eligible to apply for legal status without having to leave the country; those in the U.S. between two and

five years would have to leave the country but also become eligible to apply for legal status, while those in the country for less than two years would be required to leave, and to apply through the existing quota system.

Though those provisions of the U.S. bill apply only to illegal immigrants, because there already are paths for legal immigrants to follow for becoming residents, acquiring citizenship, the procedures spelled out in the bill should be instructive for the CNMI. At some point, the CNMI, too, will have to deal with improving the status for foreign workers who have lived in the CNMI for many years. Here, the five-year threshold may be too short - the Dekada group might gain more support if it returned to its original position of a ten-year stay as threshold. Regardless, however, monitoring the debate on the mainland - and the huge demonstrations that have accompanied it - might be a very worthy exercise for all concerned.

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An interesting example of the Western, Euro-centered thinking of many on the mainland showed up in one of those lengthy articles New Yorker magazine keeps publishing - this one about actions of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger before he became Pope Benedict XVI. The major focus of the article is on present-day attitudes in Germany towards its World War II soldiers, and particularly, the present-day attitude of the Pope. In the telling, mention is made of then Cardinal Ratzinger's visit to La Cambe, a cemetery in France for 21,000 of what is described as "German war dead." The dead include known members of an elite Nazi military division. Little attention was paid to his visit at the time. But it became more of an issue at the time of his ordination. I am not sure why this article appeared now, a year later - I could find no mention of any "trigger" action.

But I did find it very interesting that despite the extensive treatment of the issue, not a word was said about the exact same issue that has arisen in this part of the world. Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi - the longest serving prime minister in Japan - has aroused controversy again and again by insisting on paying his respects to Japanese WW II soldiers buried in the , despite the fact that are also buried there.

I know that New York is all the way on the eastern border of the U.S. mainland, but it does seem a little parochial, to say the least, that it would print something reflective of such blatant insularity.

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M Variety, 3/15/06, p 12, "Opinion:" "The right to Ridicule" by Ronald Dworkin

"So, in a democracy, no one, however powerful or impotent, can have a right not to be insulted or offended. That principle is of particular importance in a nation that strives for racial and ethnic fairness. If weak or unpopular minorities wish to be protected from economic or legal

discrimination by law...then they must be willing to tolerate whatever insults or ridicule people who oppose such legislation wish to offer to their fellow voters, because only a community that permits such insult as part of public debate may legitimately adopt such laws. If we expect bigots to accept the verdict of the majority once the majority has spoken, then we must permit them to express their bigotry in the process whose verdict we ask them to accept."

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- My brother and I, both in our seventies, have become quite involved in issues dealing with the environment - his concern has focussed on groundwater protection and use in northern Vermont - though we had not been particularly concerned when we were younger. He has started a newsletter, joined a local council, conducts letter campaigns, etc. We've concluded that maybe the explanation is that unless an environmental issue affects someone directly, commonly those issues are of only secondary importance to people still struggling to put food on the table, pay the rent, keep their head above water.

boards and continuity
mercury-tainted fish

<http://www.ehjournal.net/content/3/1/7>

The International Agency on Cancer Research (IARC) has classified employment in the boot and shoe manufacturing industry as a Group 1 risk factor, meaning there is sufficient evidence that the exposure or setting is carcinogenic to humans [6]. A number of chemicals used in the shoe and boot manufacturing industry including chlorophenols, hexavalent chromium, aniline and azo dyes and benzene are known or suspected carcinogens. Of these, benzene has most often been implicated as a likely etiologic agent in the development of leukaemia among workers in the industry. IARC has classified benzene exposure as a Group 1 carcinogen [7] and the United States Environmental Protection Agency has also characterized benzene as a known human carcinogen for all routes of exposure based upon convincing evidence from human studies and supporting evidence from animal studies [8,9]. Exposure to benzene has been most strongly associated with acute myeloid leukaemia, the most common type of leukaemia in adults [7,9].

A number of epidemiological reports have shown an association between employment in the shoe and boot manufacturing industry and an increased risk of leukaemia mortality among workers in Italy, Turkey and Great Britain [10-15]. The workers found to be most at risk were those who worked in specific jobs where exposure to solvents and glues containing high levels of benzene was common. In Great Britain, elevated mortality rates were found only among workers in the departments where solvents and glues were used to attach soles to the upper parts of shoes, and exposure to benzene occurred [12]. In Italy there was also evidence that the elevated risk of leukaemia was highest among workers who began work prior to 1963, after which time glues containing high levels of benzene were banned by law [13,14]. A follow-up of the Italian cohort of workers found that the risk of leukaemia increased with increasing cumulative exposure to

benzene [15]. Similar results, however, have not been reported in studies of mortality among workers in shoe and boot manufacturing in the United States [16-19].

However, many of the most carcinogenic chemicals, which at one time were used in the industry, have not been used for several decades.

Nonetheless, lessons learned from retrospective analyses of disease among workers in American industries may be applicable to overseas industries, particularly in developing nations, where many of the safeguards and restrictions that have been in place for decades in the US and Europe have not yet been adopted.

"There is no direct consequence between some EU shoe makers' losses and China's shoe exports to EU countries following the end of the global quota system on January 1, 2005. Chinese shoe makers oppose the EU's unfair anti-dumping probe," says the announcement.

http://www.shanghaidaily.com/art/2006/02/09/241111/Body_set_up_to_unify_shoe_makers_against_EU_probe.htm

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The increasing speed of innovation has forced companies to invest heavily into R&D initiatives in order to ensure their products remain at the cutting edge, particularly within the sports footwear sector.

To combat cost increases, the market's leading players have used their scale economies to decrease suppliers' prices.

Adidas' acquisition of Reebok will provide the company with a significantly larger scale economy with which to compete against global market leader

Nike.<http://www.marketresearch.com/product/display.asp?productid=1200407&SID=88376151-344750205-298384170>

Comparisons to Guam re schooling, new approach to tourism (see clippings)

In order for CNMI to activate those ships to assist CNMI, some things have to be in order. First, the President of the United States must first declare our area as a Disaster Area, then DHS-FEMA will come into play as those ships are DOD assets. Next, if we see that we will need them, we will recommend to the Governor to request it thru FEMA.

re: Grotto dive and lack of appropriate investigation (police tested gear above water, not under water)

I love the way it is assumed that everyone has access to tv.....

Also Fiji guy vs Abe Malae - slick! But cover different areas.....STILL need Malae - for mgmt.

The CNMI may be suffering from a slowing economy, but strangely enough, that doesn't seem to affect the restaurant business. Several new restaurants and coffee shops have opened recently, and two I know of have added lunch service to their former dinner-only hours. There's the new Chinese restaurant next to Wendy's on Beach Road, and two new restaurants, one Japanese and the other Jeff Boyer's new place, across from Memorial Park in Garapan. Then there are the new coffee shops - one in As Lito, one in Susupe next to Church's chicken restaurant, and the other Jeff Boyer's, which also has a coffee bar.

Both Naked Fish, itself a fairly new restaurant, and the Abyss have recently begun opening for lunch.

What does it mean? Of course, restaurants close, too. But it doesn't seem to be at the same rate as new ones open. Are more people eating out? Are people merely looking for a new experience? Or are restaurants settling for smaller and smaller pieces of the same pie - as the same number of people now have an even wider choice than before?

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PSS - and others - need to build accountability into funds granted by legislature - Trib 5/9 p 2

small scale venture: publish Sam's students' works
what are Chinese tourists going to do? Jap/ war sites not of interest
availability of info not necessarily an FOIA issue - but of who knows, and who is willing to share
on Guam, see truck emitting black smoke, told to report it (PDN 4/26) True in CNMI?

government by cliff-hanging - CUC fuel payments, PSS teacher payments, HPMPR renewal

Iraq war - technology keeps more wounded alive - though wounds may be terri-ble.....(clipping)

NMC accreditation satisfied by La Fiesta transfer - who accredits NMC gov't for acquisition?

Illegal dumping at PR dump shows need for transfer station

whatever happened to social eyesore beauty contest?

From Ed Klingsberg: Randy Fennel says law requires member of Treasury present at opening of poker machines; metered NMC reduced cost in half! ; JoeTen opposes increase in minimum wage since it hires so many locals

punitive fee for littering not big enough to deter people from doing so

need for large meeting places when JoeTen library space gone

corporations not held responsible, held accountable since not considered person

war on terrorists being won; war on terrorism is not.

Give aid, education, to countries where immigrants coming from. If have it there, won't emigrate...from UN report on economic and social affairs

Open airport to other vendors - magazines and books and newspapers (need to check!)

Highway bill

Zoning priority - strip malls

sad that doctors who go into nursing deprive community of doctor services

would add, in addition to very limited tourism infrastructure, the failing local infrastructure generally--power of late, the constant beach pollution and lack of responsiveness (here and Guam) to federal threats of fines for maintaining a healthy community, water quality problems on both islands. Also, year after year, vandalism of property and purse snatchings, graffiti and litter, show (at best) no improvement in solving the problem.

Also, the hotels are now entering the maintenance upkeep stages of their lives (note the upgrades and improvements being made); the newness factor gone. The challenges of dealing with ever-changing local laws and regulations re: labor and other threats (I think the attempt to take back the Nikko by Ted Mitchell left a big imprint on Japanese investment/economic observers as JAL/Nikko was prepared to implode the hotel before they left if forced out of their multi-year agreement) has made this a tough place for someone to sensibly try and get something started.

The days of venture (risk) capital are gone for Japan. There aren't too many Willie (deep pockets) Tan's around who have the money to put up now, and even if things continue to slide, or crash, he will own a major chunk of the island when things start to turn around some day. Plus, he is getting things on the cheap these days. Also, he has long known the ways of the island, which buttons to push, which local people to lobby, his local staff being well-paid to protect his interests.

The Chamber and others (existing businesses talking about CDA's QC) say not enough attention paid on longtime investment folks, keeping them happy. True, from my observation point. They are taken for granted. Frank points out that the hotels are changing hands; new buyers. But the sale price has to represent a major loss.

The cliff-like falloff in new business started with the advent of the \$100,000 security deposit. But it took years for its cumulative effect to take hold. And, finally, just recently, has it been done away with.

The CNMI is surely its own worst enemy when it comes to understanding the economic world. Bill Stewart has said for years, not for publication, 'the CNMI has done wrong just about everything possible, to undermine its own economic future.'

I can't believe someone in MVA isn't meeting with airline executives, hotel executives, and tour executives every week. Airlines, hotels, and tour companies are the life blood of our tourist industry. Somebody should be on top of this at all times. (Bud)

It would be irresponsible to pretend that I have any answers. But one can speculate. One of the tertiary reasons could very well be the increase pressures to be put on the tourism industry with a closure and downsizing of the garment industry. Any hotel manager who has been here any time at all would probably realize that far more pressures is going to put on the industry to make up for the losses in tax revenues. This at a time where media challenges of increased fuel costs and airline transportation is tempting JAL to seek greener pastures.. Combine that with the somewhat overenthusiastic and optimistic projections about the benefits of the new Chinese tourism market could have raise alarm bells within the Japanese community. I would also add that the Commonwealth has done very little to improve the tourism infrastructure in the past 20 years. This is leading more and more tourist to select more aggressively marketed destinations. Unfortunately, we have consistently been convinced that our proximity and historical ties with Japan would guarantee a constant market. No matter what happens in the rest of the world. (Sam)