

The Temptation

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The most fascinating entertainment that I ever received from a stranger in New York, was having Tomato Ketchup squeezed on my shoulder without my noticing. Not only that, but he so kindly told me about the presence of the peculiar red substance on my shoulder, and wiped it off for me. And also without my noticing, he kindly took my wallet, perhaps as an entertainment fee. A very nice experience.

Whenever we realize that we've been so cleverly fooled by another, we feel frustrated. In the recent case, the same thing can be said that of the Recruit Scandal. Poor old Mr. Ezoe, the former president of Recruit, seems to have been turned into a puppet that is being punished in front of the nation's eyes. However, no sympathy should be given to that wretched villain...a criminal that has calculated the effect of money when placed in the hands of the politicians. Money, money, money, we all love money, don't we. But people,...get angry! We have become too unconcerned about the fact that the leaders of Japan are obtaining money in a so unacceptable manner. In any period of time, politics and money have been so intimate. Yet when nation wide corruption occurs under the very own eyes of the people, it is natural for us to doubt that there is something...something absent in those politician's hearts.

Perhaps I found that something, when I was doing this wonderful, wonderful part-time job, which was to pack lunches from twelve midnight to nine in the next morning. A most educational part-time job. So great that I'd nearly fainted due to a backache, too little sleep, and boredom. What a great job. All you do is to place whatever bit of food that you've been assigned into this plastic container that comes by on a conveyer belt. My first assigned food was, guess what,...baked potato. So I went, one potato, two potato, three potato, four, and so on for seven hours. For seven hours I stood there and turned myself into a robot, going, one potato, two potato. It was so bad. Yet the most shocking of all was yet to come. I was a part-time worker, but there were full time workers. Mostly mothers from low income families. Mothers who had to come to work at eleven o'clock at night, do the torturous job until nine o'clock in the next morning. So unbelievable. Those mothers told me with a desperate expression on their face, of

the tough time that they were going through. And naturally, I became guilty about the life that I was leading.

After this part-time job, I thought about the politicians and why Recruit Scandals occur. One reason is because politics is so expensive. Politicians have to support events, concerts, large parties, weddings, funerals, and so on, by giving money. And in return, they expect votes from us. So if we don't want politics to get expensive then we should all simply reject money from politicians. Another reason is because the law is loose. If there had been a law, just like in America, that forbids any insider-trading to occur, there would never have been a Recruit Scandal. Other laws concerning bribery, tax-evasion, and so on, should also be toughened too. But the most important thing is not just for the law to get tougher, or for the people to stop expecting money from the politicians. It is for the politicians themselves to understand that they are the representatives of our nation who are supposedly faithful to the country.

The problem with today's politicians is that they are surrounded by other elites, and thus have little time with people of the middle and lower class. If they had the chance to see what kind of life people are experiencing, perhaps they would understand their own situation and responsibility. That is one of the reasons why I propose a system in Japan, where members of the diet and top ranking bureaucrats to have a chance to see and experience for themselves the real life. Let those elites do road works, garbage collecting, delivering pizzas, or even packing lunches. Let them experience the hardship of making money. Let them experience the pains and misery. When I packed lunches and did the tough job and talked with the people, my view of society changed. I really felt guilty about my life.

If the politicians can have a similar chance, their conscious will be stimulated as today's politicians are becoming unconscious about their wrong doings. If they feel guilty, that is an improvement. Because guilt is one of the preventions against temptations for money. Doing nothing about it will worsen the situation. We can change our future. We can change our politicians. We can change money politics. The temptation for money will always exist, yet we all want a clean society.