

## *Koeki* — a personal view

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I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to the Tohoku University of Community Service and Science for its very kind and very generous invitation extended to me. It has been an honour and a privilege to be given the opportunity to be a part of this very important enterprise of establishing a university committed exclusively to *koeki*. I am grateful for the chance to contribute to this work, first by presenting a lecture to a public meeting of staff, students and citizens, and secondly by placing my thoughts about *koeki* before a wider audience in this, the second issue of your new publication.

Consequently I take this opportunity to once again express my congratulations to all involved in establishing this *koeki* university, and to the first class of students, and staff, embarked together on this new venture. As the first foreign scholar to present a public lecture at this university, and now to publish in its new journal, it is certainly a rare and special experience for me, a highlight in my career and one which I value and will cherish very deeply.

I want to begin by observing that many Japanese seem to be not very familiar with this word, *koeki*, or with this concept. My experience with Japanese people, who are told (by me) about this university, is that they invariably begin by being puzzled about the use and meaning of the word *koeki*. So I would say that the first mission of this new university is to endeavor to make this word more widely understood by the Japanese public and, indeed, by Japanese academics and policy-makers.

Although one focus of this paper is on New Zealand *koeki*, it seems appropriate for me to precede that feature of my presentation with a few words about my own understanding of *koeki*.

I give this word, *koeki*, a wide meaning, a broad interpretation. In so doing, I see examples of *koeki*, and the idea of *koeki*, in many contexts, and in the activities of many groups, organizations and people.

When I was first invited to pay a visit to this university, I received an e-mail which suggested that *koeki* could be translated into English as 'the public interest' (as opposed to 'the private interest').

Subsequently it was suggested to me that the word *koeki* may also in some sense indicate a 'limitless potential'. This interpretation, in any case, bears a close relationship to the character of this university - which is, in my view, an institution with an enormous, indeed limitless, potential. It is an extraordinary achievement that a *koeki* university has been established: that is, a university devoted exclusively to the study of *koeki* in all its forms and aspects. While the word *koeki* may not have a precise equivalent in English - all translations from one language to another are in some ways approximations of meaning - the word *koeki* will be used in this paper with some care, and with a sense of sincere respect to this university and to those who are involved

in its work.

The suggestion that *koeki* could be understood as ‘the public interest’ evoked strong memories for me. These words further kindled my interest in this topic – *koeki* – and strengthened my motivation to give the deepest consideration I possibly could to its full implications.

For while I am living in New Zealand, as a Professor of Political Science at Victoria University of Wellington – situated in the capital city – I am an American, by birth, education and upbringing. While my theme in this paper may be New Zealand’s experience with *koeki*, my view of what *koeki* entails is influenced by my American background. For that reason, therefore, I want to make a few comments about my own sense of what *koeki* really involves.

This understanding that I have is also influenced by another set of identifications that I have and which are very important to me. I am also Jewish, a member of a people with a long and ancient history, with our own traditions, ideas, convictions and perspectives.

I believe that the idea of *koeki* – concern for others – is a central part of the Jewish tradition, and therefore of my own personal identity.

Nearly two thousand years ago one of our most famous rabbis – one of the most well-known and celebrated Jewish teachers – Rabbi Hillel made a statement which has since been much quoted and, indeed, much studied. Rabbi Hillel began by making the following observation : ‘If I am not for me, then who will be for me ?’<sup>1</sup> Now, if he had only asked this question, his comment would stand alone as an appeal to human selfishness or self-interest. Certainly he emphasized the importance of having a good opinion of

oneself - a positive self-image, a sense of self-esteem - and of acting accordingly. But he went on from his first observation to make a second, by immediately adding : 'But ... if I am *only* for me, [then] what am I?' This statement is a powerful declaration against selfishness, and arrogance, and indifference to others. Rabbi Hillel is stressing that a person who is only interested in themselves - and has no concern for others - is in some sense not really a person, not a complete and whole human being.

Rabbi Hillel's teaching - brief and stunning in its clarity, and, characteristically, placing before a Jew (or anyone aware of what he has to say) a clear choice, in this case between self-absorption and involvement with others - has had a profound influence on me, on Jewish people generally, and on Jewish ethics, and it seems to me to define or capture the essence of *koeki*.

Of course there need not be a contradiction between acting for yourself and acting for others. The two should go together and they often do.

In my classes in New Zealand, at Victoria University, in Wellington, I often talk with students about the possibility of *koeki*, of acting positively for others. This takes the form of discussions with students about two ideas - altruism and self-interest. Some students, for some reason, want to deny that anyone, or any government, or any country, can ever act altruistically - can ever do the right thing, can ever act generously, and kindly, and compassionately, doing the right thing with no thought of gain. Some even refuse to believe that *they themselves* can ever do something 'good' for its own sake, without a purely selfish intent or motivation.

This is a deeply cynical view - a dark view of human nature and the nature of communities - and I have never accepted it. I do not do so today.

As I have noted, I have several identities - as a Jew, a New Zealander and an American (to cite but three) - and in this connection the definition of *koeki* as involving 'the public interest' aroused a strong response in me.

The 1950s, in America, were a time that emphasized private enrichment rather than the public good. One Cabinet Minister, for instance, announced one day that 'the business of America *is* business'. Forgotten were the higher ideals engraved in our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution, where the state, indeed the country, was created to 'establish justice' and 'promote the general welfare' of the people. The United States of America is not an ethnic country - a country for one particular people - nor simply a geographical expression. America is a political country, established to assert and defend certain ideas and principles.

Now many people - most people - naturally want a high quality of life, for themselves and for their families. This goes without saying. Perhaps they also want to live in a *great* society, powerful and rich, abundant in resources and in the resolve to use them. Yet at the same time there are many who also want to live in a *good* society, where the sick are cared for, the poor are assisted, the weak are not neglected; where the widow and the orphan are not left alone, to suffer; where the old in age and spirit have their strength restored - in short, a country to be proud of.

Now in 1960 the Democratic Party in the United States nominated a man for President whom you have all heard of. His name was John Fitzgerald Kennedy. From that day to today he remains in our thoughts and in our hearts, not because of his death but because of his life and what he stood for. There has recently appeared a new movie, *13 Days*, which is a good film and in many ways reliable as history - the events that are recounted did happen and even many of the lines that are spoken were those uttered at the time - and it can suggest why so many Americans who experi-

enced President Kennedy's presidency still remember him with such affection.

He gave a speech once in which he said that there are many people who represent the strong and the powerful, the rich and the well-connected. They represent the private interests of corporations and special interest groups. But who, he asked, would represent *the public interest*, the interests of Americans as a whole. Who would speak for those who had no voice? And he said it was his task, as President, to speak for the public interest, to be the one person elected by the whole nation to represent, defend and advance the public good. He was a *koeki* President.

President Kennedy called his program for America 'The New Frontier'. It was different from other parties' programs and other candidates' campaign agendas. He said : 'The New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises - it is a set of challenges. It sums up not what I intend to *offer* the American people, but what I intend to *ask* of them.'<sup>2</sup>

President Kennedy spoke not about business, and money, and material values, but instead about 'the unfinished business of our society' - elderly people without medical care, children without adequate schooling, the reality of racial discrimination, the daily denial of human rights in a country explicitly set up to define and defend them.

This outlook does raise a number of questions that are linked to the idea of *koeki*. Why, after all, should the young care about the elderly? Why should those without children care about schools? Why should whites care about blacks? Why should the comfortable care about, and sacrifice for, those in need? Why should President Kennedy himself - rich, handsome, vigorous, successful - care so passionately about those so different from himself? The answer to each of these questions is much the same: be-

cause his ideal was *koeki* - community service, work in the public interest.

President Kennedy went back to the ancient Greeks to declare that the person who was only interested in themselves - who pursued only private causes and their own enrichment - who took no part in public affairs and gave no thought to the needs of others and the character of their own society - was 'useless' - a 'useless' person. In this he echoed Hillel's comment - 'if I am only for myself, what am I?' To this question John F. Kennedy replied : 'useless'.

President Kennedy's idea of *koeki* was international in scope. As is well known, in Japan as elsewhere, he established the Peace Corps, asking Americans to sacrifice one or two years of their lives helping others around the world. The Peace Corps was different from other forms of what was known as 'foreign aid'. It was not just a question of dispensing money to countries poorer than the United States. It was a matter, first, of inspiring Americans themselves to contribute their own time and energy to assist others less well off than themselves. Americans joining the Peace Corps did not stay in deluxe hotels, drawing large salaries and enjoying generous expense accounts. People joining the Peace Corps lived with, and among, the people they sought to assist, sharing in their experiences.

The Peace Corps was a new type of foreign aid program and represented a new type of *koeki*. While people taking part in the Peace Corps may have been drawn to it for various reasons, the program relied for its success on the willingness of well-educated, well-off Americans to make sacrifices. As a program it encapsulated the vision of 'public service' - work in the service of others - that inspired the Kennedy presidency in its finest moments. The Peace Corps was an important element in President Kennedy's vision and responsibility for it was assigned to his

brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver (married to his sister) .

Subsequently many countries have introduced their own 'Peace Corps'-style program, some involving service overseas and others - including within the United States - providing voluntary assistance to individuals, groups and communities within their own countries. New Zealand is one of the countries with such a program - Volunteer Service Abroad - and of course many non-governmental organizations now also place dedicated volunteers in programs and projects all across the world.

What would be the result of all this service in the public interest, all this *koeki* activity? In his first speech as President, his celebrated Inaugural Address, given just following the taking of the oath of office on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1961, President Kennedy said : 'All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1000 days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet.' *Koeki* - the need for community service, for action in the public interest - never ends; politics never ends. But politics can be, and should be, in this vision, an honorable profession. And so, even with no final goal ever in sight, President Kennedy said, 'let us begin.'

This idea - that we are not free to refuse to take part in the task of *koeki* even if we will never be able to complete it - also has its echoes in a Jewish source : 'although we cannot complete the task, we are not free not to take part in it'.<sup>3</sup>

This was important for a person, this readiness to go forward with an undertaking even if the effort were to be long and hard, and success difficult to achieve. To quote from the Chinese (as President Kennedy did in his Inaugural Address), 'a journey of a thousand *li* begins with a single step': a maxim or proverb also known here in Japan - *sen ri no michi mo ippo kara*. And so President Kennedy concluded what was to be his most famous address



by saying, 'With a good conscience our only sure reward, let us go forth to lead the land we love...'

True leadership, in this vision, is based on an ideal of service for others. Little wonder that President Kennedy's Washington came to be known as 'Camelot', its atmosphere and outlook evoking the saga of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, bound together by an oath of service to the weak and the dispossessed, and of loyalty to a dream of self-sacrifice and service.

In his final speech, President Kennedy intended to stress that a country that was militarily strong yet selfish, or arrogant, must ultimately be regarded as weak and incapable of being defended. Only a just society can survive - or deserve to. A just society - a society standing against inequality and indifference, against prejudice and hatred - is the only true superpower.

But he was shot, and killed, before he could give it.<sup>4</sup>

In this presentation I have spoken, or written, very much from the heart - about my Jewish values and about President Kennedy, who inspired me with his ideals and example and vision, as indeed he inspired others.

And so it could be said that perhaps I became a political scientist, and am able to contribute to the work of this new university here in Japan, in Sakata-shi, to present this paper and these reflections, all these years later, because of President Kennedy, and the effect he had upon me, when I was a young person, at a time when America was blessed with a gifted leader committed to *koeki*. He appealed to our best instincts - he had a capacity to bring out the best in people, encouraging them to fulfil their true potential as human beings.

Now New Zealand, unlike the United States, is not a super-

power. It is, in fact, from a military or political or economic standpoint, a very weak country. However, it may be a rather strong country when it comes to *koeki*.

In international affairs New Zealand has made, and continues to make, significant contributions (in proportion to its size and capacities) in many areas. In East Timor, for example, New Zealand forces have been stationed for some considerable time, attempting through their presence (which is not without risk to those deployed there) to stabilize the situation and improve the lives of the people there.

New Zealand provides support for the United Nations organization, not only by participating in peace-keeping or peace-monitoring activities of various kinds, but through contributions to the work of many of its specialized agencies. New Zealand has also been a conspicuous contributor to the work of the Pacific Islands Forum (previously the South Pacific Forum), providing assistance to the people and governments of many Pacific Island countries.

A further example of New Zealand's *koeki* activities in regional or international affairs can be found in the country's participation in rescue missions in the Pacific. New Zealand has from time to time made great efforts to seek to rescue Pacific Islanders (and others) in difficulties at sea, with air and sea rescue efforts being made to save the lives of those in jeopardy.

Although it might be possible to identify benefits to New Zealand in terms of 'goodwill', these activities for the most part offer little if any scope for national gain or selfish advantage. Of course, as noted before, there is no inconsistency in the idea of being both for oneself *and* for others: why should a person or a country not 'feel good', not achieve a sense of fulfilment or satisfaction, from doing what is right, and decent, and honorable? New Zealand's efforts to do what it can to assist its neighbours in the

Pacific offers few direct benefits to New Zealand, its people or its government. Yet New Zealand governments, irrespective of party, have maintained its involvement in the Pacific, and there is no dispute about the desirability of the country continuing with its efforts on behalf of its Pacific neighbours.

In domestic affairs - within New Zealand itself - the record is even clearer. New Zealanders prefer governments that will take an active part in community affairs, not merely observing developments but seeking to influence them for the good. New Zealanders expect their government to act on their behalf in the areas of health and education - two of the biggest issues at recent elections. Governments that cannot maintain an efficient and 'caring' health system - that cannot make their best effort to promote the physical wellbeing of *all* New Zealanders - will be challenging a legacy that seems firmly embedded in the national psyche. The same can be said for the education system: New Zealanders expect that their government will use its best efforts to provide for a quality education for *all* New Zealanders.

These expectations that New Zealanders have about the positive and caring role that the state should play in health and education reflect the country's historical position as a leader in social welfare policy.

New Zealanders have at times taken justifiable pride in their country's record in this area. New Zealand governments initiated moves to provide support for the elderly, for widows, and for orphans at a time when most countries took the view that the fate of the weak and the disadvantaged was not the concern of the whole community. There is, in short, within the New Zealand political culture a belief in fairness, and equality of treatment, which sees wealth and privilege as no justification for special treatment or preferential access to services. This idea of justice - that all, regardless of birth or circumstances, are entitled to a certain

quality of life, to security with all that that implies (in terms of housing, health care, education, and income) - means that indifference to the plight of the poor or the disabled, the weak or the disadvantaged, has not been an easy option even for conservative governments to adopt.

There is also now in existence an important body of legislation designed to discourage or prevent discrimination, on the one hand, and to give New Zealand residents (not just citizens) access to institutions to assist them with certain types of grievances. The passage of legislation to establish 'ombudsmen' - individuals to whom complaints about treatment by the state can be made - was one such statute. Others included the establishment of a Race Relations Conciliator to hear complaints about various expressions or manifestations of racial prejudice. Other institutions - a Human Rights Commission, a Police Complaints Authority, a Privacy Commissioner, a Health and Disability Commissioner, a Commissioner for Children - represent efforts to try to ensure that the state will act responsively and positively to complaints about unfair, unjust or unequal treatment.<sup>5</sup>

This theme of *koeki* - pursuing policies for the benefit of the public as a whole - has been present in New Zealand in one way or another ever since the beginnings of European settlement in the country. For that matter a concern with the public good can be dated to even earlier times, as the indigenous Maori people have long had a strong community orientation, with less of an emphasis than in Western nations on individual achievement and private ambition. Thus in the Maori view the lands, the trees, the forests, the wildlife, the rivers, and the fish were all 'community' property, not the possession of any one person, not an 'asset' to be sold or exploited for private gain, but rather an inheritance to be nurtured, protected and utilized for the benefit of all.

New Zealand's experience with *koeki* goes well beyond the

work of the state. There has long been an active 'civil society' in the country, reflected in vigorous and wide-ranging activity by a myriad of community groups covering virtually all sectors of life. In recent times, as some New Zealand governments have sought to retreat from social welfare support - to make the 'safety net' thinner and less all-encompassing - the burden on private groups and individuals to act for the public good has become much greater.

There are many examples that can be cited in this respect. Throughout the country can be found organizations and institutions established to help people suffering from almost any kind of affliction. Citizens' advice bureaus exist to offer assistance and advice to people - many of them immigrants, unfamiliar with the language and customs of the country - on all manner of things: how to raise their children; how to apply for a loan; how to manage their income and expenditure. Those who come to such bureaus have many questions, but few answers. Those who work at them are volunteers, contributing their time, their experience and their knowledge for no reason other than to help others.

I have a friend who works at such a bureau. He is a vigorous person, nearly 80 years old, retired. He has told me of the satisfaction that he gets simply from helping people. But he earns no money for the time that he takes, several days a week, to assist those with nowhere else to turn.

There is, of course, no contradiction between acting for others and gaining a sense of personal fulfilment. This is still *koeki*. For why shouldn't helping your neighbor, or a stranger, or your society to come closer to its ideal make a person feel better? It is not only the achievement of personal wealth, or power, or fame that can give an individual a certain glow. When we take a broader view and identify working for the public good as at least as worthy an activity as working for oneself, then clearly there

can be nothing inappropriate - quite the opposite - in deriving personal feelings of satisfaction by acting in a *koeki* spirit.

This ethic of community service is found in New Zealand in many social policy areas. As families face difficulties in looking after the elderly - children struggling to care for their parents - so the need for retirement homes has become more evident. When the elderly are also frail or ill, permanent care may be provided in institutions known as hospices. As Japanese society has experienced considerable social change in recent years, so a greater interest has been taken by some Japanese in the New Zealand experience with these forms of care. In every respect this involves some change of perspective, as care for the elderly and the ill becomes less a matter exclusively for their families and more a matter of community responsibility.

Other grim problems have also evoked a community response. In many New Zealand communities there are rape crisis centers, as victims of assault are counselled and comforted rather than ignored or left to fend for themselves. Domestic violence centers have also been established to provide a 'refuge' - and some have that name - from the physical and mental intimidation to which too many women (and children) have been subjected.

Victims of domestic violence also suffer financially. There are legal aid programs to provide financial help. As those affected try to reconstruct their lives, community groups provide a framework or an opportunity for assistance, offering support for those attempting to free themselves from stressful, dangerous, even life-threatening situations and predicaments.

There are also places to help people who are victims of *their own* behavior. Clinics and centers have been set up to assist people who have problems with drug use, alcohol abuse or excessive gambling. In all these cases private citizens and community groups

have stepped forward to supplement the work of governments. Often there are initiatives promoted at the local government level. The Wellington City Council, for instance, sponsors or supports the work of many groups. It publishes (and distributes) brochures and booklets highlighting the work of various organizations, while providing a directory of all the community groups active in the Wellington region.

Most of the services provided by these community groups are free of charge. This means that if people have any difficulty in their lives they can take their telephone directory, pick up the telephone and ask for assistance. Many national institutions have toll-free numbers; many also have regional and local branches (and local telephone calls in New Zealand are free).

These *koeki* or public interest concerns go beyond those of the human species. The SPCA - the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - is one organization, nationwide in coverage but characterized by many local groups, concerned with the treatment of animals. There are other such groups now, too, as a society once little concerned with codifying 'human rights' now transcends those issues to focus on the rights of animals as well. In each case there is a focus on justice, and compassion, and on working for the wellbeing of those too weak to defend themselves.

Proper care for animals is not unconnected to overall responsibilities to society. Encouraging people to take greater care of their animals instils in them a greater thoughtfulness about life itself. Here too Jewish ethics, framed long ago, places great emphasis on behavior towards animals - hunting for 'sport' has long been prohibited; there is no 'season' on savagery - and indeed it is difficult in principle to understand how a people that would be cruel to animals, or indifferent to their fate, could suddenly be counted upon to become compassionate and caring towards one another, or towards outsiders living amongst them, or towards people living in

other countries.

As befits a society with democratic aspirations, in many instances the sensibilities of individuals are ahead of those of the state. The citizen acting as careful consumer can have a great influence in this respect. For example, New Zealand supermarkets now give purchasers a choice between eggs laid by 'free range' chickens, allowed to roam about on the land, and eggs laid by 'battery hens', kept in place throughout their lives, exploited and imprisoned. Many will choose the somewhat more expensive 'free range' eggs although it not in their 'private interest' to do so, displaying ethical concerns that radiate out across the whole society.

Like many other peoples, including the people of Japan, New Zealanders are not indifferent to questions of security. However, in a country with few (if any) enemies, it is not *military* security that preoccupies New Zealanders so much as *personal* security - freedom from fear (with respect to health care and the necessities of life) for themselves and their families.

At the national level, there are concerns with *environmental* or *biological* security, a desire to protect the land itself from unwanted change. This goal is seen in the exceptionally restrictive measures used to guard New Zealand's borders not from invading armies, but rather from other types of invaders - from seeds, herbs, flowers, plants, fruits, meat, fish and other 'natural' products alien to the New Zealand environment.

Those wanting to change New Zealand are often at a severe disadvantage, challenged by those who want to protect the country in its present form, to preserve it as it is to the fullest extent possible. Groups who wish to guard the nation's rivers and lakes from development act out of this instinct, seeing the 'public interest' threatened by private developers. Governments have at times been challenged to take a stronger view; when they have



done so - enacting legislation, for instance, to establish groups known as 'guardians' for particular lakes - it is an instance of the people leading the government rather than the other way around.

In more recent times, this outlook has also been given expression in the strong movement found in New Zealand against genetic modification of plants, food products and other forms of life. In Parliament the Green Party - itself an expression of an interest in *koeki*, as Green Party voters and activists have sought to defend their country's environment against exploitation for private gain - has worked with groups outside Parliament to mobilize New Zealanders to protect the country's flora and fauna.<sup>6</sup>

Some activities taken on behalf of the public interest have been strident, at times deliberately so. Protesters seeking to end the logging of New Zealand's indigenous forests have at times taken dramatic action to spotlight their cause.

Perhaps no *koeki* activities have been so shocking as the televised road safety campaigns sponsored by the Land Transport Safety Authority, which has made a strong effort through its advertising to reduce or prevent traffic accidents. These 'public interest' commercials have sought to so disturb New Zealanders that they will change their automobile driving habits. Scenes of road carnage and its consequences are suddenly broadcast on the nation's television screens, without warning, drawing New Zealanders' attention to the need to use seat belts; to avoid drinking and driving; to drive more slowly; to handle their cars with care. These shocking images and harsh messages, broadcast for the public good, are designed to break through public complacency and apathy. Many people take a fatalistic view of road accidents, believing that they will always happen, or else see them as phenomena that will happen to others rather than to themselves. These frightening images attempt to break through and shatter these attitudes. They are a type of *koeki*, actions taken on behalf

of society as a whole in order to bring about improved security for all New Zealanders.

Some advertising campaigns target particular social groups. There are public interest commercials that appeal for greater understanding for people with mental illnesses, for example. Other television campaigns advocate a greater awareness of domestic violence and child neglect, prevention of house fires and other topics.

The goal of all these endeavors is surely to create a genuine community - not just a collection of individuals, but a society truly committed to the common good.

Some years ago the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously observed that there is 'no such thing as "society"'; there are, instead, merely individuals, living within a country's borders. In so many ways New Zealand rejects that point of view. So too do most countries, with varying degrees of firmness and consistency.

We can recognize that this is so by considering the opposite.

What would it mean to inhabit a truly selfish country, a land whose leaders reject the idea that the people are members of a 'society', whose leaders look scornfully upon the idea of *koeki* - of an overriding public interest to which the strong and the privileged must dedicate themselves. What would this lead to?

Surely the end of such thinking must be arrogance and coarse behavior, selfishness writ large, running throughout the land and affecting all of its people. Such a perspective - an anti-*koeki* outlook - lowers public morals by denying that people should care for one another. Such a view would legitimate violence and cruelty and corruption.

By contrast, a country concerned for others assists *itself* at the same time - just as individuals (like my friend, cited earlier) acting for others enhance their own life as well - by raising the ethical standards of its own people.

*Koeki* is also a discipline, a field of study, an academic or scientific field worthy of investigation in its own right. It is a valuable field of study, one being pioneered here at this new and very innovative and unique university.

The study of *koeki* can also lead us to a new consensus, a realization that the ideal of public service and community wellbeing is one shared by nations and peoples, cultures and countries, global in its reach and coverage, and ancient in its origins. In these times of change it is important to stress what is enduring while at the same time striving to promote a new public spirit. An emphasis on *koeki* does both, focusing attention on values and practices hallowed by time yet requiring today a greater degree of sophistication and resourcefulness in the face of new and unanticipated dilemmas.

In the American colonies there used to be an area known as 'the common' - the Boston common, for instance, referred to a piece of land in the city of Boston, open to all - and from that realization, that people have public needs that complement and at times surpass private aspirations - that there is *public* as well as *private* property - we can see the glimmerings of those shared feelings of national and community sentiment that are usually seen most vividly in times of national catastrophe or local disaster, when peoples overwhelmed by grief come together and leave their private concerns behind them.

When I was invited to give this talk to this university I was conscious of the fact that only a few days later I was to give yet another talk, in another Japanese community, on a topic also of

very special personal importance to me. This talk, to a public meeting in the city of Gifu, about the Japanese diplomat Sugihara Chiune, commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth in Gifu prefecture, focuses on a person whose deeds of personal courage and commitment, wholly unexpected, have already caused him to be declared a 'righteous' person by the State of Israel, a hero of the Jewish people and an inspiration to all those appalled by what the Nazi regime inflicted on the image of humanity as a rational and caring species.

It can be no coincidence that these two talks are occurring in such close proximity to each other. For Sugihara's actions during the Second World War, as he worked tirelessly to save Jewish refugees fleeing for their lives - not Japanese nationals, but Jewish people, strangers to him and to the people of Japan - are an example of *koeki* in action. Sugihara practiced *koeki*, acting for the welfare of others, as a shepherd to sheep fleeing from the slaughter.

Now it so happens that President Kennedy wrote a prize-winning book, before he became President, which was entitled *Profiles in Courage*.<sup>7</sup> The book tells about people who took risks; about people who did the right thing in the right place at the right time, at risk to themselves, with no thought of personal gain - in fact in some cases with the sure and certain knowledge that their own actions, though helpful to others and required for the common good, would bring about disaster for themselves. And yet ... they acted! And it is their courage - and the ethic that that courage exemplifies - that President Kennedy celebrates in his uncommon book.

President Kennedy wrote in his book about Americans. He was probably unaware of Sugihara Chiune's life and conduct as a Japanese diplomat. I am confident, however, that were the book to be written today, and to teach its readers about the lives of other

'profiles in courage' all around the world, that Sugihara Chiune's story would be found among its pages.<sup>8</sup>

Sugihara was a 'profile in courage'. Or perhaps I should say a 'profile in kindness'. Or a 'profile in compassion'. Here was a Japanese diplomat, defying his own government, with no thought of gain to himself, saving Jewish lives, because . . . and here a sentence, honestly constructed, must end. For we don't really know why Sugihara acted as he did. So many others did nothing; turned their backs; hid their faces.

Ultimately therefore this new university of yours, which is dedicated to the scientific study of *koeki*, must inevitably dedicate itself to the systematic study of goodness as well. One topic leads to the other.

There are, these days, many studies of human evil, often focusing on brutality, terrorism and cruelty. Attempts to understand the sources of support for the Nazi regime in Germany are ongoing and perhaps never-ending. The atrocities committed have happened - their victims are gone, annihilated, never to return - yet at the same time everything took place on such a scale as to 'defy belief'. And so people struggle to understand how it could all have happened.

Far less effort has gone into the study of human goodness, yet perhaps the need to do so is even greater. What factors make for 'righteousness'? What causes a person, or a people, or a government, or a nation to embrace *koeki* - the public good - over private gain? And how can this be encouraged? How can we bring into our midst more Sugiharas? Is there a more important topic, a more urgent task to be fulfilled, than to learn more about the conditions and circumstances that make people act honorably for others? I doubt it.

And so I return to my Jewish sources, to my Jewish tradition, for it was set down long ago, about 2600 years ago, in a place and at a time far from our own, what truly was expected of us – of each individual, but not only of each individual, but of a people, of a country, of a government, of a whole society, and it is, in the words of the prophet Micah, ‘to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly’<sup>9</sup>... – a vision of a society in which the public interest is at one and the same time truly our own.

Thank you for your interest and your attention : *arigato gozaimashita*.

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1. Rabbi Hillel’s much quoted observation originally appears in a book known as *Pirke Avot* (Chapters of the Fathers) , part of the multi-volume Jewish work known as *The Mishnah*. See *Pirke Avot*, chapter 1 : 14.
  2. There are many collections of President Kennedy’s speeches. This quote, from President Kennedy’s acceptance speech following his nomination as the candidate for President by the Democratic Party, is from the *Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Committee* (1960) , p.243. The ‘New Frontier’ speech is also quoted, in part, in Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York : Harper and Row, 1965) , p.167. As for the Inaugural Address, quoted from below, it has been reprinted in many books, its words etched in the marble of much-visited monuments. My copy is from the *Official Inaugural Program*, 20 January 1961, issued by the Kennedy-Johnson Inaugural Committee, Washington, D.C., pp.16-17 [Inaugural Supplement]. The Inaugural Address can also be found in a collection of speeches of President Kennedy’s first year in office: see John F. Kennedy, *To Turn The Tide* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962) , pp.6-11. President Kennedy’s speeches have also been translated into many languages. For Japanese language versions of some of his speeches, see Hasegawa Kiyoshi, *Eiwa Taiyaku Kennedy Daitoryo Enzetsushu* (Tokyo : Nan-undo, 1985).
  3. This observation (slightly revised here for stylistic purposes) is also from the work of wisdom known in Hebrew as *Pirke Avot* : chapter 2 : 21.
  4. The memoir from President Kennedy’s friend and collaborator, Theodore Soren-

sen, includes a reference to this final speech: see *Kennedy*, p.751. Preparing the final text of this paper led me to the final page of Sorensen's book, which I had first read so long ago. Given the tenor and spirit of my own reflections, it seems appropriate to repeat here Sorensen's final words (pp.757-8) about the man with whom he had worked so closely. After recalling 'the standards he set, the goals he outlined and the talented men he attracted to politics and public service' as well as 'his pursuit of excellence' in all manner of things, Sorensen observes: 'In my view, the man was greater than the legend. His life, not his death, created his greatness.' Finally, leaving his subject at last, he says : 'all of us are better for having lived in the days of Kennedy.'

5. Excerpts from the legislation establishing these and other entities can be found in Stephen Levine with Paul Harris (eds.), *The New Zealand Politics Source Book: Third Edition* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1999).
6. In keeping with New Zealanders' intermittent pride in koeki actions (such as social welfare policies) that have 'led the world', New Zealanders may take some satisfaction in the fact that the Greens' predecessor, the Values Party, formed in 1972, was the first national environmental party to be formed anywhere in the world, reflecting an early interest within New Zealand (compared to other countries) in the need not only to protect the environment but to promote a new set of values emphasizing moral and ethical issues.
7. This book, first published in 1955, has appeared in various editions. After President Kennedy's death a new 'memorial edition' appeared with opening words from his younger brother, Robert Kennedy. Subsequently another edition was produced, quite beautiful in appearance, this time with contributions from President Kennedy's children, John F. Kennedy, Jr. and Caroline Kennedy. See John F. Kennedy, *Profiles in Courage : The Illustrated Edition* (New York : Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, 1998).
8. There are now various books about Sugihara Chiune, some of them in English, others in Japanese. For an interesting English language work, investigating Sugihara's background and outlook, and drawing attention to other acts of courage and kindness that he carried out after completing his more famous service in Kaunas, Lithuania, see Hillel Levine [no relation], *In Search of Sugihara: The Elusive Japanese Diplomat Who Risked His Life to Rescue 10,000 Jews from the Holocaust* (New York : The Free Press, 1996). It cannot but be impressive that the Japanese school system uses a book about Sugihara as part of its English language curricu-

lum, thus teaching human values, and instructing the students about an admirable Japanese figure, while ostensibly offering merely an opportunity to improve comprehension of a foreign language. See Tomio Andou, Project Chiune and Renee Cohen, *The Story of Chiune Sugihara* (Sayusha New English Course, 1992); and Ando Tomio and Smadar Moise, *Visas for 6,000 Lives* (Sanyusha New English Course, 2001).

9. The Book of Micah, chapter 6 : 8.

## 「公益」について考えること

スティーブン・レビン

抄訳 和田明子

本日はお招き下さりまして、誠にありがとうございます。「公益 (Koeki)」を専門に研究するこの特別な大学に招かれましたことを、大変光栄に思います。公益大学の設立に対しましてあらためてお祝い申し上げます。本日、貴大学で公益について講演することは、私にとりまして、大変感慨深いことでございます。

公益という言葉は、日本人にまだあまり馴染みのない言葉のようですので、貴大学の最初の使命は、より多くの人々にこの言葉を理解してもらうことではないかと思えます。貴大学から講演依頼を受けた時、公益とは、「私益 (private interest)」に対立するものとしての「公の利益 (public interest)」と訳すことができると言われましたが、公益とはある意味で「無限の可能性」を暗示しているように思われます。「無限の可能性」とは、まさに貴大学のことであり、公益の研究に専心する大学の創設は、大変な功績なのであります。英語には「公益」という語の正確な訳語はないかもしれませんが、本日は、貴大学とその関係者に対する尊敬の意を込めて、お話を進めたいと思えます。

私は、現在、ニュージーランドに住み教鞭をとっておりますが、アメリカで



生まれ育ったアメリカ人です。また、ユダヤ民族でもあります。本日は、そのような私のバックグラウンドから、私が公益について考えることをお話ししたいと思います。

ユダヤ教の有名なラビの言葉に「もしも私が私の味方にならなければ、誰が私の味方になるというのか。しかし、私が私の味方だけになるのなら、私にどれほどの価値があらう」というものがあります。これは、私に大きな影響を与えた言葉であり、まさに公益の本質を捉えた言葉であるように思います。

また、1960年代のアメリカ大統領、ジョン・F・ケネディは、今でも多くの国民に敬愛される大統領ですが、多くの人が強い者・富める者の立場にたつ時、「全国民に選ばれた大統領は、公共の利益のために行動する」と宣言し、弱い者・貧しい者の立場にたった様々な政策を実行しました。まさに、「公益」大統領と言えるでしょう。彼は、古代ギリシャの言葉を引いて「自分のことにしか関心がなく、他人や社会のことを考えない人間は、『使い物にならない (useless)』人間だ」とも言いました。それは、先のラビの「私だけの味方をする私とは何ぞや」という問いかけに対するケネディの答えと言えましょう。私が政治学者になり、本日、貴大学で公益についてお話しすることになったのも、このようなケネディ大統領の影響を受けたからと言っても過言ではないかもしれません。

ニュージーランドも、軍事的・政治的・経済的には小さな国かもしれませんが、公益という観点からは、非常に大きな国です。国際的には、東チモール情勢安定のため派兵しているのをはじめ、様々な形で国際貢献を行っています。国内においても、ニュージーランド政府は、非常に水準の高い医療・教育・社会保障サービスを国民に提供してきました。ニュージーランドには、公正、すなわち、貧富の差に関わらず全ての人がこれらのサービスを等しく享受できなければならない、という考え方が、根付いているのです。国民皆の利益を考えた政策を実行するという公益の理念は、ヨーロッパ人によるニュージーランド入植の時代から根付いているものであり、更には、先住のマオリ民族の文化にも深く根付いた考え方です。また、政府だけではなく、様々な地域コミュニティ団体も、あらゆる分野で、人々を手助けする活動を積極的に展開しており、その事例には枚挙に暇がありません。

(ユダヤ、アメリカ、ニュージーランドと、お話ししてきましたが) 日本にも公益を実践した人物がいます。第二次世界大戦中、自らのことも顧みず政府の指示にそむき、多くのユダヤ人の命を救った日本人外交官、杉原千畝です。実は、本講演の数日後、私は、杉原生誕100周年を記念する集会で、杉原について講演することになっています。日本で公益に関係する講演を二つ同時期に行うことになったことを、非常に感慨深く思います。

現代社会では、人間の悪や残虐性、例えばなゼドイツでナチスが支持を得たのかなどの研究は、数多く行われています。しかしながら、人間の善に関する研究は非常に少なく、これから更に研究の必要性が高まるでしょう。何が人に「高潔な行為」を起こさせるのか、人や政府はどのような場合に公益を私益に優先させるのか、どうしたらそのような行動を促進できるのか、そして、どうしたら杉原のような人物を多く輩出することができるのでしょうか？ どのような状況・環境が、人間に他人のための行動を起こさせるのかを研究することほど、重要で緊急な研究課題はないと思っています。そういう意味で、貴大学によって先駆的に始められた公益の科学的研究は、大変価値が高いのです。

最後に、ユダヤの預言者ミカの言葉にふれて、本講演を締めくくりたいと思います。「正義を実践し、慈愛を重んじ、謙虚に歩んでいきなさい」

どうもありがとうございました。