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THE IDENTICAL TWINS OF NAGATA-CHÔ

Matsuoka's motto is 'straight truth and take great care of those who take care of you'.¹ An example of 'taking care of those who take care of you' is Murakami Kôsuke, who served for two years as head of the Kumamoto Prefecture Agricultural Policy Department until 2000, and who became 'policy advisor in charge' (*seisaku tantô komon*) of the Kumamoto Prefecture Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives and related prefectural Nokyo federations. He said, 'Matsuoka looked after me a lot, and I am grateful to him.'²

As for Matsuoka's commitment to 'straight truth', when, in 2001, journalists from the *Bungei Shunjû* started investigating a rumour of favouritism in NHK where Matsuoka's son worked, Matsuoka called up one of the journalists. Besides issuing a detailed denial of the allegations, he said

[h]ow old are you, where were you born, do you have parents, where do they work?...You are searching for private information. I have the right to ask you the same questions!....Is this your life's work? If any funny articles get out, I'm going to run you down! You had better be prepared! Understand?...You are all worse than cockroaches! You cockroach rascal! I hope you realise this.³

After spitting out these words with such force that it seemed that saliva would come flying out of the receiver, he slammed the phone down. In a subsequent interview a year later, Matsuoka said, '*Bungei Shunjû* are always publishing lies'.⁴

An *Asahi* journalist also reported having received threats of legal action from Matsuoka after he interviewed MAFF Production Bureau Chief Sugata Kikuhito and Agriculture and Livestock Industries Corporation (ALIC) Chairman of the Board of Directors Yamamoto Tôru (who had previously been the director-

general of the MAFF Structural Improvement Bureau). Yamamoto was the director-general of the Forestry Agency at the time of the Yamarin affair, in which Matsuoka allegedly received a ¥2 million bribe.⁵ ALIC was also the corporation that paid the BSE subsidy to meat traders, in which further bribery allegations were made against Matsuoka, stemming from the fact that both Suzuki Muneo and Matsuoka were directly involved in implementing this subsidy and both were closely connected to the meat industry.⁶ Matsuoka accused the journalist of being “a parasitic worm who preys on the MAFF”, to which the journalist retorted “*You* are the parasitic worm who preys on the MAFF”.⁷

THE TERRIBLE TWOSOME

Many reports have surfaced in the Japanese media about Matsuoka's relationship with Suzuki Muneo, and the way in which he and Muneo supported each other in politics and policymaking. Matsuoka was widely known in Nagata-chô as the Diet member who was closest to Muneo.⁸ He was described as the ‘No. 1 follower’ (*hitotsu no kobun*)⁹ of the politician who, at one time, ‘was considered a future candidate for prime minister’.¹⁰

Matsuoka and Suzuki's first meeting goes back to 1975, not long after Matsuoka joined the Forestry Agency. At the time, Matsuoka was executive manager of a MAFF divisional assistant directors' study group. MAFF Minister Nakagawa was invited to lecture to that group and Suzuki came along as his political affairs secretary. Matsuoka recounted that ‘we sat at a desk, side by side. We were sworn brothers’.¹¹ Matsuoka frequently talked about the fact that he and Suzuki drank with Nakagawa. He had even boasted earlier that although he was working in the Forestry Agency, he would become the minister's secretary when Nakagawa became MAFF minister.¹²

A slightly different story was recounted by a person connected to the Forestry Agency. He suggested that it was during Matsuoka's time as chief of the Forestry Management Station in Teshio that Matsuoka realised the opportunities that could be had through his association with Nakagawa and Muneo. As the official recalls

[d]uring his time as forestry office chief, he became close to Muneo, who was just out of the Fisheries Agency and working as Nakagawa Ichirô's secretary. At the time, Nakagawa was a rising politician in Hokkaido, and furthermore, had a firm footing amongst the godfathers of the Fisheries Agency *zoku*, and so for a young chief-of-office from the central agency, it was a

good opportunity for promotion. I have heard that it was during this period as forestry office chief that Matsuoka decided to aim to become a politician.¹³

Matsuoka's sworn friendship with Muneo began during this period.¹⁴ Ever since that time, according to some commentators, 'Matsuoka and Muneo worked together as a duo, running around Kasumigaseki and Nagata-chô and dashing along the highroad to success'.¹⁵

Various terms have been used to describe the Muneo-Matsuoka relationship. Journalists have coined the terms 'identical twins of Nagata-chô' (*ichiransei sôseiji*)¹⁶ as well as 'fraternal twins' (*niransei sôseiji*) and 'sworn brothers' (*gikyôdai*)¹⁷ in an attempt to capture the closeness and similarities between Matsuoka and Muneo and their *modus operandi* as politicians. An agricultural and fisheries-connected Diet member observed, 'they are just like twin brothers. What they say and the way they talk are identical'.¹⁸ Matsuoka was also called a 'brother-in-law' of Suzuki, and Matsuoka himself called Suzuki 'more than a sworn friend relation' (*meiyû ijô no aidagara*)¹⁹ and a 'sworn friend of 30 years standing' (*sanjûnenrai no meiyû*).²⁰ Nôminren questioned whether it could trust Matsuoka—Muneo's follower—on rice policy matters even though he was chairman of the Agricultural Basic Policy Subcommittee at the time.²¹ The farmers' group implied that given Matsuoka's close association with Muneo, he would turn a deaf ear to farmers in spite of being a 'boss of the *nôrin zoku*'.²²

Summing up the relationship, one veteran political journalist said: 'Muneo and Matsuoka are really very similar. They are like copies of each other. From their political methods and fundraising to their threatening tone, who draws influence from whom, they are exactly alike in everything'.²³ Matsuoka's political methods 'go beyond the unreasonable because they are the same as Muneo's, and they have been made fun of as the "threatening duo"'.²⁴ Matsuoka has been called the 'wild boy' of the agriculture and forestry tribe (*nôrin zoku no abarenbô*),²⁵ while his mate has been labelled the 'department store of suspicion' (*giwaku no depâtô*)²⁶ and even worse, the 'general trading company of suspicion' (*giwaku no sôgô shôsha*).²⁷ One political reporter commented

[a]ccording to a MAFF official, Matsuoka became bad (*waruku naru*) around 1995 after he became chairman of the Agricultural Basic Policy Subcommittee. When he was first elected, Matsuoka was nice and honest, but in his second term, he began to go along with Muneo after he was elected for a second time in 1993 with LDP endorsement. It was then that his behaviour degenerated.²⁸

People asked how someone such as Matsuoka, who had only been elected four times (in 2001) and who had held only two government positions (parliamentary vice-minister and deputy minister) could manage to wield so much political power. Why had he, as someone whose national name value was inferior, attracted attention?²⁹ Much of it was attributed to Matsuoka's association with Suzuki and how he modelled his political behaviour on Suzuki's. What Matsuoka learned from Suzuki was that a sure-fire way to secure money and votes and to realise his ambitions in politics was to become an influential politician (*yûryoku seijika*) who could deliver public works projects to his local district. It 'was Matsuoka's guiding of the budget to Kumamoto, his use of influence over public works in the prefecture and his provision of patronage to agriculture and forestry-related groups that gave Matsuoka a presence in the agricultural sector that was more than expected.'³⁰ One of Suzuki's most famous sayings was '*chihô e no reiki yûdô de wa nai, "kôsei haibun" de aru!*', meaning 'it is not guiding benefits to the regions, it is "fair distribution"!'³¹ In fact, Suzuki had in common with Kamei and Tanaka Kakuei an infamous reputation as a *rieki yûdô seijika*.³² Kamei is reported to have said unashamedly: 'What's wrong with guiding benefits [to local regions]? We're doing politics for the people.'³³

THE 'SPECIAL ACTION SQUAD'

In the Diet, Muneo and Matsuoka were known as the 'special action squad'.³⁴ The two of them exercised their power in various divisions and committees, whilst mutually complementing each other.³⁵ For over ten years, Matsuoka allegedly dominated Japanese agricultural policymaking along with Suzuki. He was able to 'control agricultural policy using the forceful political power of "the MM (Matsuoka-Muneo) duo" as a weapon'.³⁶ Matsuoka and Muneo were known to have 'joined hands as *nôrin zoku* for some time'.³⁷

Matsuoka and Muneo's *modus operandi* was to 'make deals with producers and companies (about what they wanted) beforehand. They then implemented the deal by forcing it through the relevant division. They cleared the party procedures by force, took the credit for policy, and then obtained the division's consent to leave the matter entirely to their own discretion'.³⁸ As one LDP executive elaborated

Muneo and Matsuoka completely controlled the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Division. When a meeting was held, they would bring Diet member followers called 'the special action

squad' and make the squad speak in a way that was convenient for them. Especially when the budget and rice price were decided, the squad not only spoke out but also blocked the remarks of those Diet members who were opposed to the opinions of Muneo and Matsuoka. The squad threatened the Diet members by saying 'if you say that sort of thing, we will make you lose the next election. We will go to your electoral district and expose today's statement'. The squad even said to government officials that they 'would get them fired'.³⁹

In trying to explain how Muneo and Matsuoka were able to wield so much power as 'the worst tribe Diet member duo',⁴⁰ one veteran political reporter went back to the splintering of the LDP in June 1993. Muneo and Matsuoka's generation was advantaged by the split in the party because members of the LDP's 'comprehensive agricultural policy faction' (*sôgô nôseiha*), such as Hata Tsutomu and Ishiba Shigeru, left the party. Hata was one of the two leading lights amongst *nôrin zoku* at the time. By 'stepping into the vacuum, Muneo and Matsuoka gained power as the mainstay *nôrin giin*'.⁴¹ As Matsuoka was not a member of the breakaway group from the Takeshita faction, leaving the LDP was not an option for him. He was a member of the Mitsuzuka faction at the time, which came through the Fukuda Takeo-Abe Shintarô line. As the mass media commented 'Muneo *giin* and Matsuoka *giin* inherited the rights and interests of the "tribe Diet members."'⁴²

An influential MAFF executive provided a similar explanation

[i]n the past, Nakagawa Ichirô and Watanabe Michio were *nôrin zoku*. After that, Katô Kôichi and Hata Tsutomu took over. In the time of Katô and Hata, they listened properly to the opinions of both farmers and the MAFF and understood the need for compromise. However, those Diet members, who hold power now, play quite different roles. Compared with 10 years ago, these current Diet members attach greater importance to the opinions of the producer side and try to accommodate their demands just as they are. The names of these Diet members are Mr Matsuoka, Mr Muneo and Mr Etô Takami. Mr Matsuoka has the experience of holding the positions of Agriculture and Forestry Division Chairman and Agriculture Basic Policy Subcommittee Chairman (this committee decides rice production adjustment). His advantage is that he has connections with dominant figures such as Mr Nonaka Hiromu and Mr Muneo, and they are skilful in controlling people and parliamentary proceedings. In 1993, Hata and others left the LDP, and the LDP broke up. The LDP slid down to the opposition party, and the Matsuoka class gained strength in the vacuum. The declining power of Ministry of Finance greatly influenced this movement. Recently, *sensei* (Diet members) are showing their influence by saying 'we ignored the intention of Ministry of Finance. We will control things'. Since they will make Ministry of Finance (in the financial crisis) spend money, deficit bonds increase. Previously there was a very natural discussion along the lines that 'if we formed a budget for rice, budgets could not be spent on other things'. It would be better if they were a little bit more intelligent in their approach, but...⁴³

By drawing on each other's influence, Muneo and Matsuoka allegedly manipulated policies in the way they wanted and strengthened their political power.⁴⁴ Matsuoka's political style of yelling at the bureaucrats in LDP divisional meetings was just like Muneo's and earned him the nickname 'Muneo of the West'.⁴⁵ Matsuoka would raise his voice, threaten people and shut them up.⁴⁶ As a MAFF OB explained

[t]aking his cue from his sworn friend Muneo, saying 'I will listen to the voices of consumers and producers', Matsuoka intervened in leaf tobacco and rice price decisions, and yelled at bureaucrats. Since he's become powerful, the Agriculture and Forestry Division itself has taken on an abnormal atmosphere. At my place, a phone call came from the current bureau director-general in an exhausted voice. Today he also called saying that he got yelled at by Matsuoka, who said, 'you're an idiot'. He's just like Muneo.⁴⁷

Muneo was also known to get angry and shout a lot.⁴⁸

[an] official in the Fisheries Agency committed suicide, it is said, because of repeated harassment from Muneo. The official was seen as a hardworking and good man, a law-abiding citizen who did not want to bend the rules for Muneo, but who had to endure threats such as 'I'm going to wreck your life' and 'I'll make sure you don't get promoted'.⁴⁹

Suzuki was also known as 'the behind-the-scenes foreign minister' who threatened MoFA officials and forced his views through during the Okinawa summit in 2000.⁵⁰ When LDP Diet member, Hirasawa Katsuei, openly called Suzuki the 'behind-the-scenes' foreign minister on a TV show, Suzuki later accosted him in the corridor of the Diet members' offices, saying in *yakuza*-like tones, 'Oi... Hirasawa-kun, what do you mean by my being the behind-the-scenes foreign minister?'⁵¹ Hirasawa shouted back, 'How am I wrong?'⁵² Just as the two were about to launch into each other, someone came along and so the fistfight did not amount to anything.⁵³

Political journalist, Yamamura Akiyoshi, commented on Muneo and Matsuoka's bullying tactics

[s]ix or seven years back, the LDP's Agriculture and Forestry Division was divided into pro and anti-Muneo factions, and with the backing of Nonaka's power, the Suzuki-Matsuoka combination would yell at, belittle and get rid of Diet members who disagreed with them. They would bring the MAFF officials in charge over to their side and manipulate things to their liking. Already in the last three or four years, there is no one who goes against them.⁵⁴

Nonaka, Suzuki and Kamei (Matsuoka's faction boss) all had in common the fact that they grew up in poverty, which reportedly made them into 'tough and shrewd political players'.⁵⁵

Matsuoka and Muneo would regularly call on each other when they thought they might need backup. When Muneo got into strife for interfering in MoFA affairs (in this case, influencing the ministry not to permit NGOs to participate in an Afghanistan aid donors' conference in Tokyo), Matsuoka directly attacked Muneo's main political critic (Hirasawa) in the Executive Council of the LDP, alleging that Hirasawa's statements had 'slandered the party itself'.⁵⁶ When journalists approached Matsuoka directly for comment, he retorted: 'What? You're so rude!'⁵⁷

One of the techniques of the terrible twins was to send the 'shock troops' under their command (about 10 other Diet member-followers) to back each other up. In October 2000

Matsuoka turned up at the Foreign Affairs Division with more than 10 of his followers. This was at Suzuki's request in order to back him up on the issue of sending surplus rice to North Korea, an idea originating with Nonaka, a Suzuki backer, who was deputy LDP secretary-general at the time. Suzuki told Matsuoka to say, 'rice support for North Korea is important'. This would help solve the rice surplus problem at the time. After Muneo argued that rice support was necessary for the progress of Japan-North Korea relations, Matsuoka stated: 'We understand the sentiment of abducted families, but we want the decision of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kôno Yôhei, as the majority.' Whereupon, his followers said, in a previously arranged chorus, 'that's right, that's right, that's right'. The voices of those who opposed rice support for North Korea were drowned out. The general position of the party was decided after the divisional meeting. Half a million tonnes of rice were subsequently sent to North Korea.⁵⁸

On another occasion, Suzuki provided backup for Matsuoka. In October 2001, Matsuoka asked Muneo to join a dinner party one evening in Akasaka. Executives of the Kumamoto Prefecture construction industry association were holding a meeting to petition LDP Diet members representing Kumamoto Prefecture. Six Diet representatives were there.⁵⁹ Strictly speaking this was just a dinner party for members of the Diet from Kumamoto Prefecture.

[when] one of the association executives, who was known to oppose Matsuoka, asked about the Diet politician (Kaneko Yasushi) who had stood as an Independent in the 2000 general election in Kumamoto (5) and who had defeated the LDP candidate, both Muneo and Matsuoka were outraged. Matsuoka shouted at the executive that he would destroy his company and make a show of his power. The executive retorted, 'go ahead and destroy it!', whereupon a shouting match ensued, which continued for 10 minutes. It was touch and go for a while, not forgetting that Matsuoka was a member of a karate club in his high school days.⁶⁰

DIVISION OF LABOUR

As a *zoku* Diet member, Suzuki secured a strong foothold in both the MAFF and MoFA.⁶¹ Nokyo's National Council admitted

on the policy front, particularly in regards to price decisions on wheat, sugar beet and raw milk for processing, which are all closely connected to his local region in Hokkaido, he would go to all the LDP subcommittee meetings and by violently pressuring bureaucrats, he would guide policies. Suzuki was not a member of the agriculture and forestry executive, but his influence was such that crop and dairy prices could not be decided without his agreement.⁶²

However, Suzuki gradually made room for Matsuoka as a *nôrin zoku*, with a division of labour gradually appearing between the two.

His and Matsuoka's respective spheres of influence were the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries respectively. Matsuoka was to the MAFF what Suzuki was to MoFA. The two of them controlled the LDP's Foreign Affairs Division and the Agriculture and Forestry Division. Suzuki used to run the Agriculture and Forestry Division, but he stopped coming seven or eight years after he started to dabble in diplomatic affairs. He basically left the running of the division to Matsuoka and one other LDP *nôrin giin*, Futada Kôji from Akita, thinking that it would be in safe hands. Muneo probably thought 'I can leave the role to this man'.⁶³

Muneo's former protégé, who was an official in MoFA, called Suzuki the 'Rasputin of the Foreign Ministry'⁶⁴ in his memoirs. As Reed writes

Suzuki was remarkably powerful. He was more in control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs than the Foreign Minister, at least with respect to Russia, Africa, expenditures on the northern islands, and bureaucratic personnel decisions. He directed MOFA expenditures to companies that contributed to his campaign and probably directed a significant amount directly into his own pocket.⁶⁵

It is said, however, that Matsuoka's power over the MAFF surpassed that of Suzuki over MoFA.⁶⁶ Matsuoka's 'threatening attitude frightened the people in the MAFF and in construction companies.'⁶⁷ This did not always make Matsuoka very popular. Government officials within the MAFF, construction contractors and others frowned on his intimidating behaviour.⁶⁸ An influential construction company executive in Matsuoka's electoral district elaborated on Matsuoka's behaviour under Suzuki's influence.

Matsuoka's face has gradually become evil. Just after he was elected, he still retained a young and pleasant impression. Doesn't he realise this himself? His face does not look like a Diet member. I have seen tens of House of Representatives members so far, but Matsuoka is

completely different from other politicians. He has a different quality altogether. He wants to do everything by himself. At any rate, he is not satisfied unless everything centres on him. He says: 'I don't approve of anything unless I permit it'. This is Matsuoka's style. Wherever there are public works, Matsuoka pokes his nose into the majority of them. Several years ago, Matsuoka controlled public construction works in Kumamoto Prefecture. Fundamentally, Diet members should not intrude into public construction works in a prefecture. I advised him, 'if you scatter money to only one company, only one out of ten companies can make a living. If you treat only one company nicely, you will have nine companies for enemies. If you continue that, you will be totally surrounded by enemies.' After I gave him this advice, Matsuoka said 'I understand', but...⁶⁹

In 2000 a weekly magazine conducted a questionnaire asking the question 'which politician do government officials want to lose the election?' According to the results, Matsuoka's close political ally, Suzuki came in first, while Matsuoka himself came in eighth as someone who 'uses personnel matters and the budget for his own interests'.⁷⁰

THE MATSUOKA-MUNEO FUND-GATHERING AXIS

Matsuoka had in common with Muneo a strong ability to collect political funds, especially an ability to obtain a great deal in company contributions.⁷¹ Matsuoka's pulling power in terms of funds, along with this *oyabun* (patron) Suzuki, was the real origin of the saying '[i]n the east Suzuki, in the West Matsuoka'.⁷² Matsuoka tapped into a very lucrative vein of political funding by deploying the same kind of methodology as Muneo, that is, blatant influence peddling and exercising influence wherever he could—from obtaining central and local government public works funding to the selection of companies to do the public works.⁷³

The pattern of Matsuoka's fund gathering reveals several conspicuous aspects. First, he demonstrated extraordinary money-collecting power early on in his Diet career. In 1994, as a fourth-year Diet Member, he raised about ¥10 million from two fund-raising parties (*hagemasukai*, or *seiji shikin pâti*). This was rare for such a relatively junior Diet member.⁷⁴

Second, Matsuoka's fund-gathering ability improved along with his experience in the political world, that is, as he gained seniority and status as a Diet member and as he acquired important agricultural and forestry committee posts and sub-cabinet positions. There were quantum leaps in donations from 1996, especially between 1996 and 2000, when Matsuoka progressed to third and fourth-term Diet membership and gained a footing as a 'backbone' Diet member (*chûken*

giin).⁷⁵ Highly significant in this regard was Matsuoka's successive holding of various important posts such as MAFF parliamentary vice-minister (in 1995) and his appointment as chairman of the UR-Related Countermeasures Subcommittee. As already pointed out, Matsuoka was deeply involved in the distribution of the ¥6.01 trillion in UR countermeasures expenditure. Then in December 2000, Matsuoka was made MAFF deputy minister in the second Mori Cabinet and firmed up his position as a *nôrin zoku*.⁷⁶

Third, Matsuoka's fund collecting was comparatively large relative to other Diet members, not only those of equivalent experience, but also those of considerable influence and standing. According to political funds for 1996 data for 1996 collected by the *Asahi Shinbun*, the total amount Matsuoka received from the LDP No. 3 Electoral District Branch, via his *kôenkai* and via his political funds management group, the Matsuoka Toshikatsu New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association, amounted to ¥280 million, which was well in excess of the average for all politicians elected to the Lower House in that year (¥160 million).⁷⁷ Amongst 384 successfully elected SMD Diet members in 1996, Matsuoka was ranked forty-first.⁷⁸ For a politician elected only three times, this was extraordinary. Those higher on the list were all well-established, famous Japanese politicians, most of whom were faction leaders, party leaders, and current, former or future prime ministers. Up there, of course, was also Muneo, who was one of the LDP's top fund raisers 'and the only one of the top five not a faction leader.'⁷⁹

The same kind of data in 1997 listed the top 50 political fund management organisations of LDP Diet members. Matsuoka's political fund management organisation, the Matsuoka Toshikatsu New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association, was ranked twenty-sixth with around ¥79 million. This was the income from fund-raising parties alone.⁸⁰ Once again, all those above Matsuoka on the list were senior LDP figures including past, present and future prime ministers, as well as factions and the New Party Harbinger (Shintô Sakigake). It was, therefore, an extraordinary amount for a third term Diet member who was not a faction leader, and who was nowhere near a ministerial or prime ministerial post, or the party leadership.

In 2000, Matsuoka collected ¥104.13 million in company donations and was ranked 13th on the list of Diet politicians in terms of amount collected.⁸¹ While this was short of first-placed Suzuki with ¥250 million, it exceeded that collected by the leader of a political faction, former Prime Minister Mori.⁸²

Fourth, Matsuoka's career connections with the Forestry Agency, his personal influence as the 'Don' of forestry policy, and his links with the forestry industry proved highly productive in terms of financial contributions. The New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association received large quantities of funds from forestry-related political groups. In 1998 alone, looking at just the major contributions from this source, Matsuoka collected ¥4.4 million from the National Mountain and Forest Roads Political League (Zenkoku Chisan Rindô Seiji Renmei), ¥2 million from the National Forestry Civil Engineering and Construction Industry Political League (Zenkoku Shinrin Doboku Kensetsugyô Seiji Renmei), ¥1.88 million from the Japan Timber Industry Political League (Nihon Ringyô Seiji Renmei), and ¥1.24 million from the Forestry Proprietors' Political Association (Ringyô Keieisha Rinseikai). These amounts also included payments for tickets to fund-raising parties. In addition, the National Mountain and Forest Roads Political League contributed ¥8 million to the LDP Kumamoto Prefecture No. 3 Electoral District Branch represented by Matsuoka. Although these groups made donations to many politicians, they were particularly generous to Matsuoka.⁸³

Other investigations revealed similar funding links between Matsuoka and forestry-related organisations. The National Political Federation of Forest Civil Engineering and Construction Companies (Zenkoku Shinrin Doboku Kensetsugyô Seiji Renmei) donated ¥14 million to Matsuoka, the National Political Federation of Afforestation and Forestry Roads (Zenkoku Chisan Rindô Seiji Renmei) ¥8.46 million and the National Timber Industry Federation (Zenkoku Mokuzai Sangyô Renmei) ¥4 million.⁸⁴ These groups made up more than half of the number of political groups contributing to Matsuoka's political funding organisation.⁸⁵ Matsuoka was assiduous in attending meetings of the Japan Association of Forestry Civil Engineering Leagues (Nihon Ringyô Doboku Rengô Kyôkai), which claimed that protecting forests also protected national land, especially if there were a lot of damage from typhoons. Protecting forests also raised issues of flood control and forestry roads (that is, public works). In 2000, Matsuoka received a total of ¥70 million in donations and party tickets from forestry-related industries.⁸⁶

Matsuoka also had financial ties to extra-departmental groups (*gaikaku dantai*) of the Forestry Agency, which were dependent on the agency in terms of contracted business. Of particular interest was the sum of ¥360,000 donated to Matsuoka in 1996 by the Japan Forest Technology Association (Nihon

Ringyô Gijutsu Kyôkai), which was simultaneously receiving large amounts of subsidies from the MAFF (amounting to as much as ¥40 billion in 1996 and 1997).⁸⁷ Making such political donations was, strictly speaking, contrary to Article 22 of the Political Funds Regulation Law (*Seiji Shikin Kiseihô*), which bans bodies that receive grants from the state, such as subsidies, from making donations to political campaigns for a year.⁸⁸

In another case, Matsuoka received a large political contribution from an organisation that was involved in bid-rigging (*dangô*), that is, illegal collusion amongst companies in order to share out government contracts. The organisation in question was a public interest corporation (*kôeki hojin*) under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Agency called the State-Owned Forests Survey Works Cooperation Association (Kokuyû Rinya Sokuryô Jigyô Kyôryokukai). Qualification for admission to the association was being a Forestry Agency OB, meaning that it was a 'descent from heaven' (*amakudari*) corporation. The association received an exclusion advice from the Fair Trade Commission because of undertaking repeated *dangô* in tenders for surveys and investigations of state-owned forests and making unfair profits. Matsuoka received a total of ¥9.42 million in contributions over five years in the period 1996–2000 from this association. JCP House of Councillors member Ôgata Yasuo took up the issue in the Economy, Trade and Industry Committee of the Upper House. He denounced 'a public-interest corporation involved in *dangô* and making unfair profits. Some of these unjust profits were "returned" to Matsuoka, who had strong influence over forestry administration.'⁸⁹

In 2000, a leading article appeared in the *Asahi Shinbun* on 24 March stating that two incorporated foundations attached to the Forestry Agency were donating money to a Forestry Agency OB who was a Diet member. The organisations were the Forestry Benefit Association (Rinya Kôzaikai)⁹⁰ and the Forestry Civil Engineering Consultants (Ringyô Dôboku Konsarutantsu). Both were *gaikaku dantai* of the Forestry Agency, in this case incorporated foundations (*zaidan hojin*) charged with forestry research, surveying and planning. Most of the executives and staff of the organisations were Forestry Agency OBs, making them *amakudari* corporations of the Forestry Agency. The benefit association donated ¥480,000 each year to Matsuoka's political funding group in the period 1996–98 (see also Table 6.1), and in 1996 bought ¥400,000 worth of party tickets.⁹¹ The consultants' group contributed ¥480,000 each year in 1996 and 1997.⁹² In total, these two groups donated

¥2.8 million to Matsuoka between 1996 and 1998. The *Asahi Shinbun* took up the ethics of a cycle whereby *kôeki hojin* that obtained jobs from the MAFF then gave political donations to OB Diet members.⁹³

Moreover, while both were *kôeki hojin* as incorporated foundations, 'they had investments in private companies that also made financial contributions to Matsuoka in direct conflict with the 1996 cabinet decision about "the standards of permission for establishing and guiding public interest corporations"'.⁹⁴ In addition, both incorporated foundations sub-contracted works worth ¥2.1 billion (in the case of Rinya Kôsaikai), and ¥140 million (in the case of Ringyô Dôboku Konsarutantsu) to these companies. As DPJ Lower House member, Ishii Kôki, observes, 'this kind of three-sided financial connection represents a typical politics-bureaucracy-industry triangle'.⁹⁵ In fact, the 'collusive structures' centring on the MAFF's agricultural civil engineering bureaucrats and the land improvement and rural development industries are replicated in the Forestry Agency.⁹⁶

A far more serious case of adhesion reputedly centred on a forestry company called Kyôrin Consultants (Kyôrin Konsarutantsu), in which various forestry public interest corporations had invested, with 25 per cent financed by the Rinya Kôzaikai and 18 per cent by an incorporated association (*shadan hojin*), the Japan Forestry Technology Association (Nihon Ringyô Gijutsu Kyôkai).⁹⁷ Although technically a private company, Kyôrin Consultants employed Forestry Agency OBs as executives and obtained jobs from the bureaucratic agencies. It was effectively a subsidiary company of Forestry Agency *amakudari* corporations. As a bureaucratic consulting firm and subsidiary company of Forestry Agency *gaikaku dantai* and *amakudari* corporations, it was part of a typical pyramid structure that spread down from the Forestry Agency to *amakudari* corporations, then to subsidiary *amakudari* companies and finally to private subcontractors of *amakudari* corporations. The web of networks spread across the regional areas of Japan.⁹⁸

Matsuoka had this pyramid system at his beck and call, and was given political donations by the *amakudari* corporations, the subsidiary companies and even the private subcontractors.⁹⁹ A previous chairman of the subsidiary company Kyôrin Consultants, Nakamura Yasushi, later became a policy secretary of Matsuoka's.¹⁰⁰ Nakamura channelled donations to Matsuoka from the Japan Forest Technology Association, which held 18 per cent of the shares of Kyôrin Consultants, via Kyôrin, which was technically a private company

and therefore, in this way slipped under the Political Funds Regulation Law (which banned public organisations from making political donations).¹⁰¹

Fifth, contributions from companies and organisations (*kigyô, dantai*) in the construction industry made up a large proportion of donations to Matsuoka's political funding organisation.¹⁰² Matsuoka's political funds revenue and expenditure report (*seiji shikin shûshi hôkoku*) in 2000¹⁰³ revealed significant contributions from construction companies.¹⁰⁴ On the contributors list were major general contractors (*zenekon*), civil (agricultural) engineering companies (*doboku kaisha*) and construction companies (*kensetsu kaisha*) that received contracts for the projects in which Matsuoka was involved.¹⁰⁵ Companies and places of business on the list numbered just under 500.¹⁰⁶ Most were, in short, construction companies (*doken gyôsha*), or construction material suppliers such as glass companies.¹⁰⁷ The 'donations varied from around ¥100,000 to ¥5 million at the most, but it demonstrated how loyal to Matsuoka the small and medium-sized civil engineering construction industry was, and how big their expectations were of him.'¹⁰⁸

One company executive said, '[p]ublic works projects make up 90 per cent of our business. With this recession, I'd say all of the civil engineering and construction companies in Kumamoto are in much the same position'.¹⁰⁹ Another said, '[s]tructural improvement projects from the MAFF come to us thanks to Mr. Matsuoka. He's doing his best to ensure that construction continues for both the Kyushu bullet train and the Kawabe River dam projects'.¹¹⁰ For example, Matsuoka received ¥33.85 million from 42 companies that were contracted by MLIT to construct the Kawabe River Dam.¹¹¹ Another person connected to the political world commented that 'Mr Matsuoka advocates increases in the national debt and expansion of the supplementary budget, and there is no doubt that behind his opposition to decreases in the budget [under Prime Minister Koizumi], there is the "pressure" of donations'.¹¹²

Looking at the overall picture, over the six years between 1995 and 2001, a total of 483 companies and organisations contributed more than ¥50,000 a year to the Matsuoka Toshikatsu New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association.¹¹³ Including donations of under ¥50,000, a total of ¥211,860,160 was contributed to Matsuoka's political funding group from companies and organisations located across 22 prefectures.¹¹⁴ The top 10 companies and organisations contributing to Matsuoka's political funding group

in order of amount between 1996 and 1999 are listed in Table 6.1.¹¹⁵ As the table shows, 60 per cent of the top-ten listed donors were construction companies in Kumamoto Prefecture.

Most of the companies on the list also contributed to the LDP Kumamoto Prefecture No. 3 Electoral District Branch, of which Matsuoka served as the branch representative. In 2000, Matsuoka collected about ¥920,000 from two political fund-raising parties, and the LDP's Kumamoto Prefecture No. 3 Electoral District Branch collected ¥104 million donated by about 500 companies connected to public works such as civil engineering and construction material companies.¹¹⁷ According to rumour, a construction company also shouldered Matsuoka's secretary's salary.¹¹⁸ A spokesman from one of the companies on the list of Matsuoka donors said 'a contribution amounting to hundreds of thousands of yen per year is insignificant for us. We believe Matsuoka *sensei* has contributed to the development of forestry. The fact is, we contract forestry-related work'.¹¹⁹

Table 6.1 **Top 10 contributors to Matsuoka Toshikatsu New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association**

Rank	Name of company and organisation (location)	Amount contributed (¥)
1	Mitsuhashi Company (Shibetsu City, Hokkaido Prefecture)	2,000,000
2	Sugimoto Construction (Aso Town, Kumamoto Prefecture)	1,792,000
3	Jotoh Logistics Warehouse (Ozu Town, Kumamoto Prefecture)	1,720,000
4	Japan Conservation Engineers (Minato Ward, Tokyo)	1,680,000
5	Forestry Benefit Association (Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo) ¹¹⁶	1,440,000
6	Dai Ichi Kiko (Kumamoto City)	1,260,000
7	Ishizaka Company (Kikuka Town, Kumamoto Prefecture)	1,200,000
8	Mori Industry (Aso Town, Kumamoto Prefecture)	1,152,000
9	Renda Gumi (Hondo City, Kumamoto Prefecture)	1,100,000
10	Otsubo Construction Industry (Hakusui Village, Kumamoto Prefecture)	1,080,000

Matsuoka's New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association also benefited from contributions from 115 individuals, amounting to a total of ¥44,355,000 between 1996 and 1999. These contributions were approximately 25 per cent of the total donated by companies and organisations. However, the number of individuals was still large. The top 10 contributors by total over the period 1996-2001 are listed in Table 6.2.¹²⁰

The main contrast between Table 6.1 and 6.2 is the fact that individual contributors came from a greater range of geographic locations (50 per cent were from Kumamoto, and 20 per cent were from Hokkaido) compared to the company and organisations that contributed to Matsuoka.

As head of the LDP branch in Kumamoto (3), Matsuoka received the bulk of contributions, which were collected in small amounts but from large numbers of construction-related companies in Kumamoto Prefecture.¹²¹ Even Matsuoka admitted that 'although individual contributions are small, the company contribution is large overall. Contributions are the result of the fact that various people support me.'¹²²

In the LDP's Kumamoto No. 3 electoral district revenue and expenditure report, companies from Hokkaido, where Suzuki's electoral district was located,

Table 6.2 **Top 10 individual contributors to Matsuoka Toshikatsu
New Century Politics and Economics Discussion
Association**

Rank	Name of individual (location)	Amount contributed (¥)
1	S. N (Kushiro City, Hokkaido Prefecture)	2,500,000
2	M. N (Kushiro City, Hokkaido Prefecture)	1,000,000
3	T. U (Enzan City, Yamanashi Prefecture)	500,000
4	K. S (Akita City, Akita Prefecture)	480,000
5	T. S (Ito City, Shizuoka Prefecture)	480,000
6	M. N (Miyagawa Village, Mie Prefecture)	480,000
6	M. A (Kikuka Town, Kumamoto Prefecture)	480,000
6	K. M (Menda Town, Kumamoto Prefecture)	480,000
9	K. I (Aomori City, Aomori Prefecture)	400,000
10	H. K (Yatsushiro City, Kumamoto Prefecture)	360,000
10	S. M (Kikuchi City, Kumamoto Prefecture)	360,000
10	T. H (Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture)	360,000
10	H. M (Niigata City, Niigata Prefecture)	360,000
10	T. N (Tsunagi Town, Kumamoto Prefecture)	360,000

were also prominent.¹²³ In fact, a large number of companies contributed to both Matsuoka and Muneo. Table 6.3¹²⁴ lists companies contributing more than ¥50,000 per year and the amounts received by Muneo between 1995 and 1999 and by Matsuoka between 1996 and 1999. The amounts were donated to Muneo's 21st Century Policy Research Association and Matsuoka's New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association. A total of 24 companies had the same company name and place. Most were forestry or construction-related companies located in Hokkaido Prefecture.

First place on the list was Mitsuhashi Company, which was a leading timber company in Hokkaido Prefecture. It also made annual contributions of ¥500,000 to the LDP's Kumamoto No. 3 Electoral District branch every year even after 2000.¹²⁵

Matsuoka's revenue and expenditure report was similar to Muneo's report in that there was an overwhelmingly large number of contributions around ¥100,000. Moreover, many of the same names contributing ¥100,000 were listed in Matsuoka's revenue and expenditure report almost every year.¹²⁶

In 2005, details of Matsuoka's political funding income report for 2004 were revealed. The Matsuoka Toshikatsu New Century Politics and Economics Discussion Association was ninth on the list of the top 10 recipients of donations from fund-raising parties. Those ahead of Matsuoka's political funding group were LDP factions (old Hashimoto faction (first), Mori faction (fifth), Horiuchi faction (seventh) and Kamei faction (eighth)), political parties (the DPJ (third)), an industry league (the Pharmaceutical Industry Political League (sixth)), and two leading LDP politicians (Hiranuma Takeshi (second) and Nakagawa Hidenao (fourth)).¹²⁷

STEALING FROM THE PUBLIC PURSE?

In 2000, the Kumamoto Prefecture No. 3 Electoral District Branch collected ¥12,100,000 in contributions from individuals.¹²⁸ Of this, ¥5,000,000 was donated by a single individual, Yoshii Junichi, who had been with Matsuoka since his first election in 1990. Yoshii came to be employed in the publicly funded position of No. 1 secretary after Matsuoka was first elected in 1990. He stayed in that position until 2000.

The exact amount that Yoshii donated was ¥5,127,427. His annual salary in 2000 was estimated to be ¥8,850,000, and so ¥5,000,000 represented a sizeable slice of his annual income. Investigative journalists dug around and came up

Table 6.3 Companies contributing to Matsuoka and Muneo

Company name	Location of head office	Amount contributed to Matsuoka (¥)	Amount contributed to Muneo (¥)
Mitsubishi Company	Shibetsu City, Hokkaido Prefecture	2,000,000	2,500,000
Yamarin	Obihiro City, Hokkaido Prefecture	720,000	600,000
Taiyoo Development	Yatsushiro City, Kumamoto Prefecture	720,000	360,000
Ikoma Gumi Corporation	Asahikawa City, Hokkaido Prefecture	480,000	1,800,000
Kuramoto Sangyo Co.	Ikutahara Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	360,000	720,000
Matsumoto Gumi	Hakodate City, Hokkaido Prefecture	240,000	1,800,000
Daido Industry Development	Shirataki Village, Hokkaido Prefecture	240,000	360,000
Hokusei Co.	Tobetsu Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	140,000	500,000
Takaya .	Iwamizawa City, Hokkaido Prefecture	130,000	120,000
Doken Co	Ashoro Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	1,940,000	
Saito Gumi	Teshio Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	720,000
Kikuchi Construction	Hokkaido Prefecture		
Kikuchi Gumi	Takinoue Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	480,000
Kyo Construction Industry	Ebetsu City, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	600,000
Sanjo Construction	Kitami City, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	1,760,000
Yamamoto Gumi	Teshio Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	360,000
Kagoshima Construction	Teshio Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	120,000
Morinaga Gumi	Asahikawa City, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	240,000
Ishiyama Gumi	Teshio Town, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	360,000
Daiho Corporation	Chuo Ward, Tokyo Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	720,000
Tanimura Gumi	Iwamizawa City, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	630,000
Tsujihiro Gumi	Fukui City, Fukui Prefecture	120,000	660,000
Tanaka Industry	Shibetsu City, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	1,800,000
Shimada Construction	Abashiri City, Hokkaido Prefecture	120,000	2,500,000
Marufuku Construction	Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture	100,000	120,000

with some interesting facts. Apparently Yoshii had temporarily retired after the June 2000 general election, but was almost immediately re-employed in July 2000. When he resigned he received a retirement allowance of approximately ¥6 million. When asked whether he had contributed his retirement allowance to Matsuoka, he acknowledged, 'I suppose that's the case...I quit once because there was an election on'¹²⁹

When Matsuoka was approached directly at the Diet members' dormitory in Tokyo to confirm or deny this, he answered, 'I don't know. This is the first I've heard of it. I don't know.'¹³⁰ However, when he was told that Yoshii had admitted it, he said, '[t]hat's a procedural matter. That's what I've heard. I don't know anything about matters concerning Yoshii....I don't know anything about the retirement fund issue.'¹³¹ Following this encounter with journalists, he got straight into his car, still carrying the bag of garbage that he was intending to throw into the rubbish.¹³²

The same night journalists accosted Matsuoka in the Diet members' dormitory, they received a phone call from Yoshii. He elaborated on the details of receiving the retirement allowance, and, regarding the donation to Matsuoka, he said, 'it's something that I did of my own accord as a means of settling things and taking responsibility now that I was re-employed.'¹³³

A similar suspicion arose that Matsuoka generally raked off the allowances paid to his state-supplied secretaries. According to a person connected to the local political world, Matsuoka would keep the allowances of his state-funded first and second secretaries, and then redistribute the money to five or six secretaries including his privately funded secretaries.¹³⁴ When asked about this point also, he totally denied it, saying 'that's not the case at all. We don't do that.'¹³⁵ It would seem, however, that raking off secretaries' allowances is a semi-norm in Nagata-chô.¹³⁶ More than 80 per cent of Diet member's offices do it, according to Arima Harumi, a political commentator with experience as a Diet member's secretary.¹³⁷

FACTION-BUILDING

Muneo and Matsuoka thought they were so politically successful that they could attract a tribe of followers who could always be bribed by political funding into following politically powerful Diet members. They had an eye on generational succession and the reorganisation of factions, and they worked together to gather young Diet members and hold a study group.¹³⁸

In August 2000, rumours circulated that the traitor Muneo was aiming to create a separate faction of his own. Information came to light about a meeting held at Ishingô, a Chinese restaurant in Akasaka, Tokyo. A total of 25 people turned up, 14 from the Etô-Kamei faction, to which Matsuoka belonged, and 11 people from the Hashimoto faction to which Suzuki belonged. The prospective name given to the group was the Suzumatsukai, taking the initial syllables of both Muneo's and Matsuoka's names. It was the beginning of a new faction under Suzuki's leadership but people did not find the name very inspiring. Suzumatsu was very close to another Japanese word 'suzumushi' meaning a 'cricket', and reference was made to the 'two crickets' singing in unison.¹³⁹

The new grouping was supposed to take over from the group called the 'Society to Create Tomorrow's LDP' (Jimintô no Asu no Tsukurukai), which was an embryonic grouping attracting younger Diet members after the 2000 general election when the Mori-Nonaka executive structure in the LDP loosened.¹⁴⁰ One of the participants commented

I do not care for this society. Its members are only flattered by the mass media. We are conducting activities in the Suzumatsukai with the intention of creating the mainstream of the next regime. For the name of the association, there was a discussion to call it the Suzumatsukai, taking the names of both Suzuki and Matsuoka. However, some thought that "the name was uninspiring and a bit too conspicuous" and so the name was not decided. It was designed to be an association in preparation for the formation of the Suzuki faction, and aimed to draw in other members by adding politicians from other factions.¹⁴¹

The new grouping was due for official inauguration by September 2000, adding Diet members from other factions.¹⁴²

After the meeting 'a reporter asked Matsuoka, "Will you create a faction?", to which he replied, "We are considering that option. It may end up being that way."¹⁴³ Matsuoka was known to be a follower (*kobun*) of PARC Chairman Kamei. Asked about this, he gave the following explanation.

To start with, we need to back up the Nonaka-Kamei executive regime. Next, we will create the Kamei faction in opposition to YKK (Yamasaki, Katô and Koizumi). Then sooner or later, we aim to create the Suzuki faction. My plan is to stabilise the LDP through cooperation between the Shisuikai faction and the Hashimoto faction.¹⁴⁴

When asked whether he wanted Suzuki to become prime minister, Matsuoka said, 'Mr Kamei is my boss. First, I want Mr Kamei to do his best to become prime minister... Since Mr Suzuki is also a competent politician, he will naturally

become a candidate for prime minister later'.¹⁴⁵ Suzuki was more reluctant publicly to acknowledge the existence of the embryonic new faction. He affirmed that he was from the Hashimoto faction and a close advisor of former LDP Secretary General Nonaka, while his friend Matsuoka was a close advisor and follower of PARC Chairman Kamei.¹⁴⁶

In spite of Matsuoka and Muneo being labelled 'the identical twins in Nagatacho', one point of difference between them really stood out. Muneo was well known for distributing political funds to Diet members and prefectural assembly members in order to build-up a tribe of followers. His style was aggressively to distribute money to other politicians. Politicians who received money from Muneo formed the core of his 'Munemune Kai' (Munemune Association). In 1996 (an election year) he reportedly gave ¥7.1 million to this group, ¥1.2 million in 1997, ¥2.7 million in 1998, ¥2.5 million in 1997, ¥2.7 million in 1998, ¥2.5 million in 1999 and ¥2.3 million in 2000.¹⁴⁷ Matsuoka was a member and reportedly received ¥7.5 million in funding from the association over a period of two years.¹⁴⁸ The same kind of money flows were not matched by Matsuoka. He was less keen on distributing his own funds.¹⁴⁹ Despite this, a report surfaced in late 2001 that outside the top factions, only Matsuoka and Suzuki had distributed *mochidai* (rice cake money) to young Diet members, which suggests that Matsuoka was being reckless beyond his means.¹⁵⁰

Documents presented to MIAC by Matsuoka's political funding group confirmed that he received donations from Suzuki's political funding groups.¹⁵¹ The Special Investigation Department of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office also uncovered the fact that Suzuki did not record all the necessary financial details in his revenue and expenditure reports, including outlaying funds for activities that were not political activities such as contributing funds for the cost of construction of Matsuoka's own house.¹⁵²

According to one source, amounts flowing from Muneo to Matsuoka between 1990 and 2000 amounted to ¥44 million.¹⁵³ The ¥12.5 that Matsuoka received from Muneo over the period 1996–2000 was more than six times the amount that Matsuoka received from Kamei in 1998.¹⁵⁴ Then, in 2001–2002, Matsuoka received funding worth ¥7,050,000 from Muneo.¹⁵⁵

Discrepancies were observed in Muneo's recorded outgoings compared to Matsuoka's recorded incomings. In one case, Matsuoka did not record Muneo's contribution at all.¹⁵⁶ Overall, the amounts were so large, they confirmed the existence of the Munemune Kai, in short, the Suzuki Muneo faction.¹⁵⁷

Moreover, they also underlined the very special relationship between the Matsuoka and Muneo. No Diet politician contributed so generously to another without regard to some purpose or other. Muneo reputedly ‘used his money and his power ruthlessly...using the familiar tactics of money and intimidation.’¹⁵⁸ He had ‘twice been voted the most corrupt politician in all Japan.’¹⁵⁹ As a construction company executive observed

[t]here are two paths. One is a shorter way, but there is a cliff in the way. If the cliff collapses, the path is dangerous. The other path takes time, but it is safe. If someone is an ordinary politician they don’t take the dangerous path. However, I got the impression that Matsuoka and Muneo are advancing along the most dangerous, shortest distance path.¹⁶⁰

BORDERLINE BRIBERY: MONEY FOR FAVOURS

Various political contribution scandals suggest that what Matsuoka engages in goes well beyond the boundaries of political brokerage. It skirts the fine line between legal and illegal activity and, on some occasions, arguably crosses over the line: ‘Matsuoka is asked to mediate and accept a bribe in the guise of a political funding contribution in return’.¹⁶¹ Several examples of this kind of activity have come to light during Matsuoka’s political career. Such activities can only be described as ‘borderline bribery’, or ‘money for favors’. They have been a staple of Matsuoka’s Diet career.

Matsuoka’s clientelism has extended well beyond activities that could be called ‘policy interference’. The deals he has engineered on behalf of clients have sometimes been matters of public policy over which bureaucrats exercised discretion, but he has also mediated in a much wider circle that just bureaucrats. The common feature of such activities is that they are conducted in order to solicit money from individuals. Matsuoka has sold his influence as a mediator to various clients who solicited favours (engineered by Matsuoka) for money. He has provided his clients with inside information, with powerful contacts, with loans, with government contracts, with exemption from the application of specific administrative regulations, or simply his continuing services as a broker.

In 1993, when Matsuoka was a second-term Diet member, he called the King of Real Estate, Sasaki, from a telephone booth at Haneda Airport, saying, ‘I’m about to go to Kumamoto. Can you lend me ¥30 million?’¹⁶² Sasaki’s answer was, “‘Sensei, since I learned a lesson from Company T, I cannot lend you money any more.” Matsuoka said, “you can’t lend me the

money?” and I declined by saying “not this time”. Then he said, “there is nothing I can do about it” and hung up the phone.’¹⁶³ On this occasion, Matsuoka was clearly seeking a loan for himself, just as he earlier had mediated a loan from Sasaki to Company T.

The dividing line between a loan and a financial contribution is, in Matsuoka’s case, often quite blurred. In 1996, Sasaki received a witness summons to the ‘*Jûsen* (Housing Loan Company) Diet’. From about five days before the summons day, Matsuoka starting calling Sasaki. As Sasaki recalls

Matsuoka called 4 or 5 times a day and said ‘I borrowed, not received the money from you, right? Please do not talk about anything suspicious (in the Diet).’ Indeed, there is no such case that Matsuoka received the money from me, and I thought he misunderstood. I recalled that I calmed him down by saying ‘I know that, *sensei*’. Since this continued for three to four days, I thought Matsuoka was saying a peculiar thing.¹⁶⁴

Matsuoka was subsequently named in a statement from a major financing company president’s to the *jûsen* inquiry as having been ‘asked a favour’.¹⁶⁵

In 2002, Matsuoka had another encounter with Sasaki at the Capital Tokyo Hotel in Nagata-chô. As Sasaki recalls

[w]hen I went to the restroom, Matsuoka called out ‘long time no see’, and we shook hands by chance. Then, Matsuoka was all smiles and said ‘is there any good chance to make a bit of money?’ I replied with a joke that ‘if there were a good chance to make a bit of money, I would call at his office soon’.¹⁶⁶

Other information suggests that Matsuoka’s mediation for bribes was structural, meaning institutionalised in his political organisation. A Mr ‘K’, who was the former chief of Matsuoka’s local office (and whose later position was described as office counsellor) reputedly controlled Matsuoka’s electoral district. Numerous people with local political connections in Kumamoto testified

[w]hat ‘K’ is doing is the same as what Satô Saburô¹⁶⁷ is doing in Katô Kôichi’s office. It is a mystery why the mass media takes no notice of this matter. He [‘K’] is a purely a broker secretary, and what he is doing is the same as the *sensei*. The year before last, on the occasion of the prefectural gubernatorial election, the LDP’s federation of branches asked for cooperation from general contractors without knowing that they were already contributing money to Matsuoka. ‘K’ was said to have been enraged that they were interfering with their source of finance.¹⁶⁸

THE FUJI BANK SCANDAL

In 1991, not long after Matsuoka was elected, his name surfaced in the Fuji Bank Fraudulent Loans Scandal. This ‘drew attention very early on to Matsuoka’s “big shot” ways.’¹⁶⁹ The Fuji Bank Akasaka Branch public relations section chief undertook ¥700 billion in illegal loans, with ¥260 billion vanishing into the night. ‘Zennippan’, a resort development company, was one of the companies financed by Fuji Bank.¹⁷⁰ Investigations into the affair revealed that Matsuoka received approximately ¥9 million from the resort development company (which he later returned).¹⁷¹ The former president of Zennippan, Hanada Toshikatsu, looks back on Matsuoka’s connection with the Urausu Resort Development in Urausu Town, Hokkaido Prefecture

I met Matsuoka for the first time just after he became a Diet member. My first impression of Matsuoka was just as I saw him. People call Matsuoka a mini-Muneo and say he shouts in (LDP) divisional meetings. But, he was cringing to me, and I got the impression that he was just a typical government official. His personality was straightforward. I was introduced to Matsuoka by Sonoda Hiroyuki (House of Representatives member, representing Kumamoto) who brought him to a high-class Japanese-style restaurant in the Ginza in the daytime saying, ‘please take care of Matsuoka’. Mr Sonoda introduced Matsuoka while we were eating and drinking. He said Matsuoka might be useful for something in relation to resort development. My association with Matsuoka went as far as that. Even in relation to the report that I shouldered the salary of Matsuoka’s secretary, because Sonoda asked me to do it, I just paid. I paid not because Matsuoka asked me for the support. Well, it is true that I paid a total of ¥19.2 million (in political contributions, party tickets, secretary’s salary), but in what order? Since the *Asahi Shinbun* investigated the matter and wrote about it in an article, it is true. Generally, since Matsuoka is timid, he cannot tell a lie. Although I told Matsuoka ‘you do not have to pay the money back’, he made a point of paying the money back in full by money transfer. For that reason, Matsuoka is timid.¹⁷²

The scandal involved the removal of protected forests for the Urausu resort development. As Hanada continues

I did not make any requests to Matsuoka in relation to the removal of protected forests for the resort development. Matsuoka himself explained, ‘when I inquired [with the Forestry Agency], (the application was already submitted and) the arrangement of the content was already completed. I did not do anything more than that’. This is also true. However, since I ran into trouble by failing to meet the deadline for the bank financing contract, I asked Matsuoka to ‘cooperate in a businesslike manner.’ Matsuoka said, ‘since the application has already been submitted, if the schedule is delayed, please let me know.’ I did not say anything. He was just smiling. At such a time, a politician does not say anything. After that, there were no reports from Matsuoka regarding his inquiries to the Forestry Agency.¹⁷³

The *Asahi Shinbun* (dated the 7 of November 1991) reported that 'Matsuoka made inquiries to the Forestry Agency regarding the removal of protected forests for Urausu Resort, asking questions such as "how are you handling it?" around June 1990.'¹⁷⁴

THE BSE SCANDAL

In September 2001, the first outbreak of BSE occurred in Japan, and the whole of Japan fell into a BSE panic.¹⁷⁵ The origin of the BSE problem was traced to the 'dysfunctional' MAFF.

It was insensitive to the BSE warning from the EU and triggered the disease because of cosy relations with and fear of *zoku giin*, and hatred between executives....Talented staff were neglected and forced to retire at an early age by the MAFF administrative vice-minister and his group. Although their precise number was unknown, problems with personnel even extended to the suicide of some staff.¹⁷⁶

One MAFF OB argued that

[c]orruption within the MAFF was the main reason why the ministry was unresponsive to the warning from the EU regarding the outbreak of mad cow disease in the UK and the information about human infection with Creutzfeldt Jacob disease (CJD). Agricultural administration was paralysed by mutual animosity between officials, the continuous occurrence of various scandals, the fear of *zoku* Diet members as well as the adhesion with them. The MAFF's state of absent-mindedness caused the outbreak of mad cow disease.¹⁷⁷

The most problematic aspect of this whole issue was the purchase by the government and disposal by incineration of domestically produced beef, which allowed for the fraudulent substitution of foreign for domestic beef by meat trading companies. The beef buy-up policy was put in place even before the blanket inspection of cows for Mad Cow Disease was implemented, which began on 18 October 2001.¹⁷⁸ At first, MAFF Minister Takebe Tsutomu commented 'the beef before the inspection is also safe',¹⁷⁹ and the MAFF was negative about the government's purchasing the beef. However, the LDP's *nôrin zoku* refused to go along with this.¹⁸⁰ As a result, the MAFF did a complete policy switch. Its original position was that beef should be safe as long as the internal organs such as the brain and intestines were removed. This was behind 'Minister Takebe's foolish performance in eating fried beef (*yakiniku*) during the BSE debacle'.¹⁸¹

Muneo and Matsuoka were two of the principal dealmakers in a critical phase of compiling measures to cope with the BSE outbreak in late 2001.¹⁸² When the outbreak first occurred, Muneo and Matsuoka pressured the MAFF

to purchase beef from the meat companies that held a large quantity of stock. The LDP's BSE Countermeasures Headquarters (BSE Taisaku Honbu), which had been set up to deal with the problem, held a meeting on 17 October 2001. At the time, one cow had been found to have BSE, all beef deliveries had been stopped and meat companies had 13,000 tonnes of processed beef in stock. Beef traders, who were holding the slaughtered beef that had been excluded from the market, complained, 'if the MAFF's investigation of Japanese beef cattle proceeds, the price of the 13,000 tonnes of beef excluded from the market will fall to zero, and beef traders will be forced into an awkward situation.'¹⁸³

The meeting of the countermeasures headquarters was attended by various *nôrin zoku*, the MAFF deputy minister, the MAFF Production Bureau director, the MAFF Livestock Department director¹⁸⁴ as well as other MAFF officials, together with officials from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The MAFF was loath to incinerate the meat because it looked like an admission that the beef was not safe.¹⁸⁵ Muneo, Matsuoka and others shouted that 'all the beef should be purchased before the inspection'.¹⁸⁶ According to a journalist attached to the MAFF, Matsuoka and Muneo said, 'the state has to bear the burden of the whole amount of the incineration fee and the purchase cost of the 13,000 tonnes of beef.'¹⁸⁷ Muneo argued (in words that were to become infamous),¹⁸⁸ '[t]he state just has to say they will take the 13,000 tonnes. That is all that needs to be done. All right? It's a simple solution. It's just a matter of ¥26 billion if it's ¥2000 a kg, or ¥13 billion if it's ¥1000 a kg. You can get Etô (Takami) *sensei* or somebody to make the budgetary measures. Got that?'¹⁸⁹ Muneo reportedly intimidated the MAFF bureaucrats present at the meeting,¹⁹⁰ including his shouting at Production Bureau Director-General Kobayashi Yoshio.¹⁹¹

Matsuoka also made his point strongly from the very beginning of the meeting, saying 'the state should purchase all the beef even if it costs more than ¥10 billion. In fact, even if it costs ¥100 billion as in the EU, we should do it. We should do as much as if not more than the EU.'¹⁹² The essence of his subsequent remarks went as follows.

Who will purchase the stock, the MAFF or the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare? I'll get everyone to decide here and now before you leave the room. Even the EU conducted intervention purchasing. Even though we said we would do the equivalent of the EU, why are you leaning in the direction of the Ministry of Finance? Doing roughly equal to the EU is the consensus of the division. The point is to produce an outcome. Just talking and listening is no good.¹⁹³

According to one report, 'since there were deputy ministers from two ministries there, Matsuoka wanted them to make the state take care of it politically. Another thing Matsuoka wanted was for the prime minister to make a safety declaration in two days time.'¹⁹⁴ CAPIC advisor, Etô Takami, said to the assembled MAFF officials, 'I do not ask you to take responsibility. We should purchase under the ruling party's responsibility'.¹⁹⁵ When Muneo turned up at the meeting the following day, he backed Matsuoka up by saying the same things as Matsuoka had already said, '[a] safety declaration is exceedingly essential. It should be performed by prime minister.'¹⁹⁶ The 'MAFF's policy was overturned as if it were nothing, without a chance given to officials to put a counterargument.'¹⁹⁷

The scene at the LDP BSE Countermeasures Headquarters in mid-October 2001 where Matsuoka, Muneo and Etô sent for MAFF bureaucrats and demanded the buying up of beef by the state was shown over and over again in the media.¹⁹⁸ Etô, Suzuki and Matsuoka became well known as the three key people at the centre of the emergency countermeasures project. Having received their instructions, the MAFF immediately instituted the all-head inspection of beef cattle, and the processed meat in the warehouses was purchased by the government and incinerated.¹⁹⁹

However, it did not take long for the smell of corruption to hover over the beef deal. As one media source commented

[a]s tribe Diet members, this [countermeasures project] may have been an 'honest and decent' thing to do, but if there were any begging from special industry members involved, it becomes a crime. Furthermore, there were many businesses bumping up their stock with imported and meat cut-offs and rushing to cut up beef before the buy-up began on 25 October.²⁰⁰

As it turned out, prior to the countermeasures meeting, the amount and manufacturers' asking price for the beef in stock had been passed on by a big-shot beef executive directly to MAFF officials in a meeting in the MAFF building. This big shot and representatives of three related meat groups had pre-decided the allotted amounts for each group in a room in the ministry, and passed this on secretly to the bureau in charge. The MAFF (Meat and Egg Division) said this was not in fact so, and also denied any pressure from tribe Diet members and beef traders.²⁰¹ MAFF Minister Takebe also declared openly, 'the MAFF is responding firmly to unreasonable opinions from politicians.'²⁰² Nevertheless, the MAFF official who drew up the beef buy-up scheme was reportedly opposed to it, suggesting that he gave in to pressure from the *zoku*

gin led by Muneo and Matsuoka, who had taken on board the views of those in the meat industry.²⁰³ The scheme provided for government purchase of 13,000 tonnes of frozen meat for ¥29.3 billion in a total budget of ¥200 billion for BSE countermeasures.²⁰⁴

Matsuoka was a member of the three-man LDP Europe Research Group (Ôshû Chôsadan) headed up by former MAFF Minister Yatsu. The group travelled to Europe to see how the Europeans had dealt with the BSE problem. When the group returned to Japan it reported back to a meeting of the Agriculture and Forestry Division and the BSE Countermeasures Headquarters.²⁰⁵

There was a strong suspicion of adhesion between Muneo and the meat industry concerning the system by which the MAFF enforced the purchase of domestically produced beef.²⁰⁶ Everyone recognised that Muneo and Matsuoka accorded priority to the meat distribution industry in the BSE countermeasures. Suzuki's electorate was the Hokkaido PR bloc, while Matsuoka's was in Kumamoto Prefecture, both prominent beef-producing regions. Livestock producers were important sources of support for both politicians.²⁰⁷ On top of this, major meat companies donated money to one of Muneo's political funding groups.²⁰⁸ One popular magazine in Japan (*Shûkan Bunshun*) disclosed that 'Suzuki Muneo and "Muneo of the West" (Nishi no Muneo)—Muneo of the East and West—had orchestrated the scandal of the BSE beef buy-up'.²⁰⁹

The May 2002 issue of the magazine *Sentaku* commented, 'both are known for their intimate relations with major meat wholesale companies such as Hannan in Osaka City and Fujichiku in Nagoya City.'²¹⁰ The links went back to the time of Nakagawa Ichirô.²¹¹ Former chairman of the Osaka meat company Hannan Corporation, Asada Mitsuru,²¹² known as the 'Don' of the meatpacking industry, was reportedly a supporter of Nakagawa and when Nakagawa died, he became a supporter of Suzuki.²¹³

Another source in the LDP elaborated

[t]he Hannan and Fujichiku big meat groups originally had good relations with one-time *nôrin zoku* godfather, the late Nakagawa. After the death of Nakagawa, while his first son Shôichi kept his distance from the meat industry, it was Muneo Suzuki, who had been Nakagawa's secretary, who began to deepen friendly relations. Muneo invited Asada to his eldest daughter's wedding as the guest of honour. It is said that the two companies and Muneo were intimately bound up in each other's dealings.²¹⁴

The close relationships between Asada and Muneo centred mainly on financial support, such as making donations, providing luxury cars, paying

consultants' fees (¥300,000 for half a year)²¹⁵ and providing Suzuki with a *kôenkai* office, the Osaka Food Distribution Research Institute (Ôsaka Shokuhin Ryûtsû Kenkyûjo). Through Suzuki and his sworn friend Matsuoka, Asada had a direct pipeline to the political world.²¹⁶ According to one report

'Muneo of the West', Matsuoka, joined up with Muneo, Hannan, and Fujichiku. In the 1990 Lower House elections, Muneo introduced Matsuoka to Asada as his influential backer. Ever since, a division of labour apparently had been promised: Hannan has been Muneo, and Fujichiku has been Matsuoka.²¹⁷

Prior to the October 1996 election, Matsuoka went to pay his respects to Asada, and to ask for his help when running in the election.²¹⁸

Hannan Corporation was not only involved in the distribution of beef, but also in beef production, rearing 5,800 head of beef cattle, and producing more than 470,000 tonnes of meat annually. Total sales of the group exceeded ¥300 billion.²¹⁹ The extent of Hannan's involvement in beef production and distribution accords it considerable market power. It even 'has the power to influence beef prices.'²²⁰ Because of this power, an official of the Livestock Department of the former Livestock Bureau of the MAFF commented that the MAFF could not neglect the 'Asada Pilgrimage'.²²¹

Fujichiku leads the beef industry in the Nagoya area, and Asada was also an executive of the company. A person in the meat industry explained, '[t]here isn't a business that can stand up to the Hannan-Fujichiku alliance, and their presence is such that even the government administration acknowledges their superiority.'²²²

Asada's portion of the beef buyback scheme was 1700 tonnes—or more than 10 per cent.²²³ All up, a total of 40 groups nationwide were involved in the government-funded beef buy-up scheme, but of these, the three meat-trading groups in the Kansai region (Osaka, Aichi and Hyogo) offered suspiciously large amounts of beef for purchase when compared with other groups.²²⁴

The beef inspection regime became much stricter in early 2002, moving from sampling all lots to inspecting all boxes in order to check whether imported beef was definitely not included in the beef for incineration. Not surprisingly, six beef groups petitioned MAFF Minister Takebe for a relaxation in the inspection regulations and a return to less severe sample inspections. The groups at the centre of the request were the National Federation of Meat Industry Cooperative Associations (Zenkoku Shokuniku Jigyô Kyôdô Kumiai Rengôkai, or Zennikuren), the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Unions (Zenkoku, Nôgyô Kyôdô Kumiai Rengôkai, or Zennô) and others. Their

representatives went to the MAFF to discuss the issue. Asada, who disliked appearing in official and public capacities, was involved in the request behind the scenes.²²⁵

A highly significant meeting took place in Minister Takebe's office in April 2002. A report that made mention of the meeting was compiled by the chairman of Zennikuren for the chairman of the Prefectural Federation of Meat Industry Cooperative Associations (Todofuken Shokuniku Jigyô Kyôdô Kumiai Rengôkai), its prefectural organisation. At the meeting in the minister's office, the meat industry lobbied the government for necessary countermeasures in response to the distressing situation in the meat marketing industry. It was opposed to the MAFF's announcement at the end of March that it would subject all beef boxes for sale for examination, switching from sample box to all-box testing. From the MAFF side, the minister, and others such as the Production Bureau director-general, the Livestock Bureau director-general and the Meat and Egg Division director were present. From the industry side, executives from Zennikuren and 19 other executives from companies such as the Japan Ham and Sausage Industry Cooperative Association participated. Of these, 14 were members of Zennikuren. According to one report, the group included big wigs from the meat industry such as Asada and Nagoya's Fujichiku's President Fujimura Yoshiharu.²²⁶ A MAFF official recalled, 'they pressed Minister Takebe, saying "explain yourself about the all-box examination!!!" and "do you mean to treat the industry like criminals?!" Muneo reportedly made the arrangements for this group negotiation'.²²⁷

Because Asada and Fujimura were big wigs of the meat industry, who sponsored powerful MAFF Diet members, Minister Takebe could not easily reject the 'request activities' associated with these two.²²⁸ However, he 'lost his temper at the meeting with the meat industry executives, saying: "Why do I have to be spoken to in such a way?!" He declared he would "do the box examinations no matter what!" Thus the meat industry's plan to stop the box examinations collapsed'.²²⁹

As it turned out, the major meat-wholesaling company, the Osaka-based Hannan Corporation with which Matsuoka and Muneo were deeply connected, was later found to have received the subsidies for BSE illegally.²³⁰ In August 2004, Asada pleaded guilty to swindling the government out of ¥5.03 billion through the beef buy-back scheme.²³¹ He pleaded guilty to conspiring with others to label imported and other types of ineligible beef falsely as domestic meat in order to qualify for government subsidies.²³² The ¥5.03 billion

amounted to about a quarter of the ¥21 billion in BSE-related subsidies that the government paid out.²³³ Asada reportedly gathered advance information on the government's program from politicians 'with whom he was friendly'²³⁴ as well as from MAFF officials.²³⁵ He purchased 94.5 tons of imported beef from Heisei Foods in Hiroshima Prefecture. This meat was then sold under the buyback plan as domestic beef. It originally came from a meat processor in Kumamoto City.²³⁶ In total, Asada falsely labelled about 434 tonnes of unsold imported beef, which was ineligible for the buy-back, and ordered his group companies to procure more of it.²³⁷ This was not the first occasion in which Asada had broken the law. He was arrested in 1987 for bribing a Livestock Industry Promotion Corporation (LIPC) official, Aoyama Yutaka. Veteran journalist, Mizoguchi Atsushi in his book *Emperor of Meat: A Man Who Made A Fortune, Asada Mitsuru (Shokuniku no Teiô: Kyofu o Tsukanda Otoko, Asada Mitsuru)*, 'depicts Asada as a powerful political fixer. He is portrayed as a man who works secret deals with politicians such as former Liberal Democratic Party heavyweights Muneo Suzuki and Hiromu Nonaka, and is a close friend of Yamaguchi-gumi boss Yoshinori Watanabe.'²³⁸

The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department conducted a secret investigation of Hannan and its links to politicians. While the investigation began with Suzuki as their prime target, their focus gradually shifted to Matsuoka. An executive of the Metropolitan Police Department stated, '[w]e have received instructions from the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office in code saying, "give us M, whatever it takes", but there are some who are saying, "we are getting confused as to whether M is "Muneo" or "Matsuoka"'.²³⁹

The Special Investigation Department of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office maintained top-secret documents called 'The Politicians' File'. It contained records allegedly pertaining to Nonaka, Kamei, Suzuki and Matsuoka, including the personal connections and flow of money relating to these four. An OB of the Special Investigation Department commented, 'we exposed Kanemaru (Shin, former LDP deputy-president) for tax evasion, and then Takeshita (Noboru, former prime minister) died. There is a possibility that we might get two of the four (Matsuoka and Muneo) left in the file'.²⁴⁰

One MAFF OB was scathing about Matsuoka's role in engineering the domestic beef buy-up scheme, thereby arranging concessions for people in the meat industry who were a source of financial backing. In this respect, Matsuoka's skill reputedly far exceeded that of Muneo.²⁴¹ This was despite an assertion from

Matsuoka's Diet office that '[t]he BSE Countermeasures Headquarters created the system of the state buy-up of beef, not Matsuoka. Therefore, to say that he is receiving a portion of that money as political donations is groundless.'²⁴²

After his behaviour in the LDP's countermeasures committee, the MAFF began working towards a parting of the ways with Matsuoka, and even the LDP tried to get rid of him as a 'noise-maker'.²⁴³ At the beginning of March 2002, the first meeting of Special Committee Concerning Securing Food Safety (*Shoku no Anzen Kakuho ni kansuru Tokumei Iinkai*), under the chairmanship of former Defence Agency Director-General, Norota Hôsei, was held. The committee was launched by the LDP to debate the review of food safety administration. In reality, the special committee represented the first attempt by the party 'to remove the noise-makers such as Muneo and Matsuoka'.²⁴⁴ The special committee was an organisation under the direct control of PARC Chairman Asô. The special committee comprised senior LDP figures who set about appointing PARC chairs and deputy chairs not only for agriculture, forestry and fisheries divisions, but also for health, labour and welfare, environment, cabinet and other related divisions. An influential Diet member, who was a core member of the committee, explained that 'this is Matsuoka's removal.'²⁴⁵

THE SYRIAN EMBASSY AFFAIR

Matsuoka's name also surfaced in relation to a dubious affair involving the Syrian Embassy in Tokyo. A building in Azabu-Nagasaka-chô, which the embassy was leasing, was presented for auction in July 2001. The building's owner had gone bankrupt, and a real estate company made a successful bid for it at the auction. The company subsequently asked the Syrian Embassy to vacate the building. When the embassy refused, the company requested an eviction notice from the Tokyo District Court. The court decided that the eviction was not possible under the Vienna Convention. However, the High Court,²⁴⁶ to which the real estate company appealed, argued that the compulsory execution (of the eviction) was possible, based on the fact that the person renting the building in question was an individual, a Mr Kabul, the temporary acting Syrian ambassador, and therefore, diplomatic extra-territoriality did not apply in this case.²⁴⁷

The High Court decision made the eviction possible and in December 2001, the compulsory execution of the eviction began. The public safety authorities inspected the rooms and peeled off every single piece of wallpaper, saying that Syria was an anti-American, Islamic country.²⁴⁸ However, a Japanese person

claiming to be connected to the Syrian side appeared at the real estate company and requested suspension of the execution. An hour later, another person called Izumi Hideki, who claimed to be the Diet secretary of Tanikawa Kazuo,²⁴⁹ also appeared and demanded, '[s]top the compulsory execution! A political settlement has been made over this property.'²⁵⁰ However, a court official 'indicated that the court had a handle on the fact, saying, "[t]he enforcement officers turned a deaf ear to that individual, and the building was vacated, as ordered."²⁵¹

It was later learned that Izumi had been fired from Tanikawa's office for embezzling tens of millions of yen 10 years earlier. There had been no contact between Tanikawa's office and Izumi since, and he had been requested to stop using name cards claiming to be Tanikawa's secretary.²⁵² Izumi later appeared suddenly at MoFA with Matsuoka and the temporary acting Syrian ambassador. At the time, Matsuoka was allegedly working for the temporary acting ambassador in relation to the Syrian Embassy's building problem. Matsuoka belonged to the Japanese-Syrian Friendship Diet Members' League (Nihon Shiria Yûkô Giin Renmei), which was practically defunct, but the Syrian side calculated that the services of Matsuoka as a broker were for sale and that he would be able to squeeze MoFA.²⁵³ Matsuoka and Izumi pressed the administrative vice-minister, saying, 'we ask you to please do your best in regard to the Syrian case'.²⁵⁴ However, their request was to no avail. MoFA had decided against the Syrian Embassy in relation to the leasing issue,²⁵⁵ and as a result, the embassy felt betrayed by MoFA.²⁵⁶ It decided to resort to power politics, seeing MoFA as an imaginary enemy.²⁵⁷

Following the court order for eviction issued by the Tokyo High Court, the Syrian Embassy also filed a special appeal. The Supreme Court rejected this appeal on 23 January 2002.²⁵⁸ On the evening of 24 January, the Director-General of the MoFA Minister's Secretariat, Komachi Kyôji, and the Director-General of the Middle East and Africa Bureau, Shigeie Toshinori, were summoned to a dinner hosted by Matsuoka at an Akasaka restaurant in Tokyo, the Tsuruhachi. Waiting at the restaurant²⁵⁹ were the Syrian Chargé D'Affaires, Mr Haida, and two Japanese people who claimed to be connected to the Syrian Embassy, one of whom was Izumi. Others at the meeting reportedly included *yakuza* and the embassy's Egyptian interpreter, who used a false name and who had acted as a go-between for Middle Eastern ambassadors and Japanese traders and brokers, and who had possible connections with *yakuza*. He had been involved in many embassy-related troubles.²⁶⁰ As one journal reported

[a]fter an hour, Matsuoka arrived at the restaurant and the group decided to move to a larger private room. However, suddenly there was a commotion. Chargé D’Affaires Haida had asked Matsuoka to put in a good word to MoFA on the issue of the Syrian Embassy move, to which Matsuoka said, ‘I was in my electorate until yesterday, and I just came back. I promise I’ll do it’ and apologised. Haida reported that he had been warned: ‘You shouldn’t rely on dodgy connections’ and that his application was refused at the gate when he went to MoFA to register the number plate of his official car. After the translator had finished relating the story, Matsuoka exclaimed: ‘What!?’ He then made several angry phone calls on his mobile phone, leaving his guests waiting in the large room. Then, in just under an hour at about 9pm the Director-General of the MoFA Ministers Secretariat Komachi and the Director-General of the Middle East and Africa Bureau Shigeie appeared.²⁶¹

Matsuoka reportedly shouted at the MoFA officials at the restaurant. He said to Shigeie

‘[y]ou always tell lies, don’t you?... You said you had an appointment with Nogami, but he said he didn’t recall having made such arrangements. Were you not going to come if I didn’t find out?’ Shigeie could only reply ashamedly. At this point, Matsuoka broached the issue of the Syrian Embassy. Komachi replied: ‘There is not much we can do about the judgement of the law...’ But as if to cut him off, Matsuoka said harshly, ‘There is something wrong here. This is a diplomatic issue. Don’t you know how important Syria is to Japan?’²⁶²

After this, Muneo arrived with some of his close associates (MoFA division directors), including the Director of the MoFA Policy Planning Division, Uemura Tsukasa, former administrative secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tanaka Makiko.²⁶³ Matsuoka ‘who had wanted to give the MoFA bureaucrats a scare, had summoned Suzuki, who was holding a thank-you party for the International Conference on the Reconstruction of Afghanistan at a nearby steak restaurant. Uemura reportedly turned pale upon seeing Komachi and Shigeie.’²⁶⁴ Matsuoka told Suzuki of MoFA’s clumsiness in dealing with the issue and the meeting ended at 11pm. With nothing resolved, however, the only purpose of the dinner party appeared to be Matsuoka’s intention to demonstrate his influence. Komachi and Shigeie were later reshuffled from their posts.²⁶⁵ When later questioned about why he had called Komachi and other MoFA officials to the restaurant, Matsuoka replied, ‘[a]t the meeting, the Syrian Embassy produced documents on the building in English. So we decided to call in specialists from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.’²⁶⁶ He also explained the situation (and his part in it) in the following way

[t]he previous chargé d’affaires at the Syrian Embassy warned me last year that this might escalate into a bilateral problem. So I talked several times to Foreign Ministry officials, such as Mr Shigeie, to look for ways to reach an amicable settlement. The Syrian side has blamed the Foreign Ministry for the consequence (forcible eviction). (The Syrian side) protested that its

flag had been taken away. They also said: 'Our president is angry because Syria's dignity has been undermined'....The intensity of the discussion on the Syrian side was serious. They showed their discontent and anger even over drinks. They were quite prickly.²⁶⁷

A later report revealed further contact between MoFA officials and Matsuoka and Izumi. The Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Matsunami Kenshirô, division chiefs and bureaux directors-general had a meeting with Matsuoka and Izumi in February after the restaurant incident.²⁶⁸

The episode raised questions about Matsuoka's true purpose in acting as a mediator for Syria.²⁶⁹ Asked why he had become involved in the issue, Matsuoka replied that he belonged to the Japanese-Syrian Friendship Diet Members' League and was asked for guidance as Kabul was an acquaintance. He claimed that the first time he met Izumi was on the 24 January at the dinner. He denied that he had taken Izumi to MoFA before that, although he admitted that Izumi might have been there at the time.²⁷⁰ He said that he had never heard of the 'political settlement' that Izumi demanded should prevent the execution of the eviction and also flatly rejected any suggestion that there was any 'giving and receiving of money'.²⁷¹ As a result of the affair, some commentators asked whether Matsuoka was taking over from Muneo in having MoFA under his thumb because Muneo was on the verge of sinking (into political oblivion) as a result of corruption scandals.²⁷²

THE YAMARIN SCANDAL

In 2002, reports surfaced that a Hokkaido logging company by the name of Yamarin,²⁷³ which was at the centre of a political bribery probe, had paid Matsuoka ¥2 million in 1998. At the time, Matsuoka was chairman of the State-Owned Forests Problems Subcommittee. The payment was not recorded as income by his political funds management group.²⁷⁴ Earlier (in 1996 and again in 1997), Yamarin had officially contributed ¥360,000 to Matsuoka.²⁷⁵ Such funds were reported under the Political Funds Regulation Law.

In June 1998, information came to light that Yamarin had carried out illegal logging from around 1992 and the Forestry Agency was considering a severe administrative punishment for the company.²⁷⁶ According to one report

Yamarin went into a mountainous area in the middle of the night and cut trees down with chainsaw. As far as we know, Yamarin stole 7,062 trees. In fact, this had been a daily occurrence by Yamarin over a long period. The illegal logging had been exposed twice, and a total of 10 people had been arrested. At the same time, a total of nine executives from a local forestry office had been appointed to high positions in Yamarin. Someone formerly connected to the forestry

industry commented, 'Yamarin and the local forestry office are completely companions in crime. The public prosecutor ignored the issue. This collusion went as far as the local forestry office lending even its official seal to Yamarin, in order to send the logs to the market'.²⁷⁷

The Forestry Agency later imposed a seven-month administrative punishment on Yamarin for illegal logging in national forests. The sanction froze its qualification to participate in tenders for the purchase of logs from the Obihiro Forestry Management Branch Office, a local outpost of the Forestry Agency. Yamarin had no choice but to withdraw from bidding for the public sale of logs by the Obihiro office.²⁷⁸ The Yamarin President Yamada Isao (85 years old) then petitioned Matsuoka²⁷⁹ about the matter and gave him the ¥2 million donation. Two days after Matsuoka received the money he spoke with senior officials of the Forestry Agency and asked for leniency for Yamarin.²⁸⁰ According to a person connected to the local political world

Yamada served as the chairman of Suzuki Muneo's *kôenkai*. He has been deeply involved in politics up to now. If Yamarin were excluded from tenders for cutting down trees in state forests by the Forestry Agency, its business would not be viable. So Matsuoka desperately attempted to rally his strength by using his political power.²⁸¹

The fact that Matsuoka had received a donation from Yamarin came to light in the process of the investigation of Muneo by the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office.²⁸² Matsuoka's office denied receiving money from Yamarin, saying that the matter was still 'under investigation, but there were no incidents where he had asked for favours or had approached people'.²⁸³ One of his secretaries

[c]laimed that the money Matsuoka had received from Yamarin was a 'political donation' [which was, therefore, above board and not tied to any political favour]. However, the secretary could not confirm the date and amount of money involved, saying that all the relevant documents had been 'scrapped'.²⁸⁴

The secretary also said that Matsuoka 'had no recollection [of the donation] whatsoever'.²⁸⁵ His 'office replied to a newspaper interviewer that Matsuoka had returned the money by the end of the year, but his office "did not remember" the date or the method of receiving the money'.²⁸⁶ A sports newspaper, *Nikkan Sports*, commented that two days after receiving the donation on 4 August 1998, Matsuoka 'called the Forestry Agency director-general and appealed to him to take the "appropriate" steps for his punishment, but the director general refused'.²⁸⁷ Another source disclosed that Matsuoka returned the money to Yamarin in early 1999 after illegal logging in government forests in Hokkaido became an issue in the Diet.²⁸⁸

Matuoka's receipt of political funds from Yamarin was allegedly part of a bigger deal involving Muneo, who was later prosecuted for accepting a ¥5 million bribe from Yamarin. Muneo accepted the bribe in exchange for seeking favourable treatment for the company from the Forestry Agency.²⁸⁹ According to sources at the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office, President Yamada met with Suzuki on 4 August and asked him to get the Forestry Agency off the firm's back. Four executives from Yamarin, including Yamada, visited Suzuki's office in the Kantei (Suzuki had just been appointed deputy chief cabinet secretary). They asked him to pressure Forestry Agency officials to sell Yamarin trees on national land after the end of the ban. The 'company wanted the agency to sell it an amount of trees equivalent to what it was unable to purchase under the ban and to do so outside the public bidding process.'²⁹⁰ The ban on Yamarin's participating in tenders had been extended for a month and its main forestry businesses were greatly affected.²⁹¹

At Suzuki's behest, President Yamada allegedly delivered ¥5 million in cash to one of Suzuki's secretaries in his Diet office on the same day. Having received the donation, Suzuki called a senior Forestry Agency official on the spot to ask for better treatment for Yamarin but the request was denied.²⁹² Later that same day, Yamada and other executives met with Matsuoka and gave him the ¥2 million. According to a statement by Yamada handed to the Lower House by Muneo in mid 2002, the Yamarin president recollected that on 4 and 5 August, he had also made a donation of ¥2 million to Matsuoka and ¥500,000 to Matsushita Tadahirô,²⁹³ who was the MAFF parliamentary vice-minister at the time, and who represented the Kyushu PR constituency. Yamada's statement also said, '[the Public Prosecutor said to me] they were only after Suzuki. I understood this to mean that although I had given donations to Matsuoka and Matsushita on 4 and 5 August, their cases would not be subject to investigation'.²⁹⁴ Even so, when the Muneo scandal broke, Matsuoka, clearly under strain, reportedly 'raised his voice to government officials and bureaucrats of special public corporations, and sometimes even to his fellow Diet members'.²⁹⁵ Matsuoka and Matsushita were questioned by the Special Investigation Department and were reported to be 'trembling in fear'.²⁹⁶ Officials in the Ministry of Justice were heard to say '[i]f anything, (Matsuoka's) aims are more obvious than Mr Suzuki's, and in terms of dirty money finding its way to him, he has great aptitude'.²⁹⁷

It was on 7 July 2002, three weeks after Muneo's arrest that *Sankei Shinbun* reported Matsuoka's threatening of Kitamura Naoto, an LDP Lower House Diet member representing Hokkaido (13), in a headline saying 'Matsuoka: Election Defeat Rather Than Crush Yamarin'.²⁹⁸ Kitamura had reportedly whistle-blown to MAFF officials at that time that Matsuoka was pressuring the Forestry Agency regarding Yamarin. Matsuoka became angry because Kitamura had told some top officials in the MAFF that '[both Muneo and Matsuoka] had pressured the Forestry Agency on Yamarin's behalf'.²⁹⁹ Matsuoka called up Kitamura and threatened him '[i]f you intend to smash Yamarin, I will make you lose in the next election'.³⁰⁰ Matsuoka was already daggers drawn with Kitamura because Kitamura had defeated Muneo twice—in 1996, as a candidate from the New Frontier Party and again in 2000, as a member of the LDP, forcing Muneo to retain his Diet seat only by virtue of the LDP party list in the Hokkaido PR bloc. Kitamura had refused to move over for Suzuki as the LDP's endorsed candidate in Hokkaido (13).

In fact, the ties linking Yamada with Muneo and Matsuoka ran very deep. According to a person with connections to the Forestry Agency

Yamarin was an influential company in the east of Hokkaido which developed all-out support for Nakagawa Ichirô from the time it was called Yamada Forestry [Yamada Ringyô]. President Yamada supported Muneo after Nakagawa's death, and even served as chairman of Muneo's supporters' organisation, but there was a head clerk in his company called Akahori. He was the person involved and present at the bribe at the deputy chief cabinet secretary's office, and is still the president of a company related to Yamarin. This person is actually a classmate of Matsuoka from Tottori University.³⁰¹

Both Akahori and Matsuoka were in the Department of Forestry³⁰² at Tottori University, and both Matsuoka and Muneo were known to value friendships with old classmates.³⁰³ According to another classmate

[i]f I remember correctly, the two [Matsuoka and Akahori] were a year apart. Akahori was Matsuoka's junior, but he hardly came to university and had to repeat about four years. So they actually graduated about five years apart, but the Forestry Department of Tottori University has a very strong alumni network. The department established an alumni association called 'Sarenkai' in various places, its name taken from the crest that the Tottori sand dunes create. There are very few OBs in Hokkaido, so this probably made their sense of camaraderie all the stronger.³⁰⁴

According to a person related to Yamarin

Yamarin was totally under the control of President Yamada Isao, his second son President Yamada Satoshi and the director at the time, Horiuchi. On the second floor of the headquarters,

their three desks were arranged facing the company employees, and everything was decided by these three, from important directions of the company projects to donations to politicians. Akahori was the only outsider out of all the Yamada family firms to rise through the ranks, and he was particularly trusted by President Isao. Akahori is a classmate of Matsuoka, so the relationship is pretty obvious. So in regards to the August 1998 lobby that has now become an issue, it was natural for Yamarin to go to Matsuoka.³⁰⁵

A journalist attached to the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office also revealed

[f]or Matsuoka who has served as the chief of a forestry office in Hokkaido, this region is like a 'second base of operations' (*konkyochi*), it also being Suzuki Muneo's sphere of influence. In reality, in Matsuoka's political funding reports, donations from Hokkaido forestry-related businesses are far greater than others.³⁰⁶

When Matsuoka was chairman of the Agricultural Basic Policy Subcommittee in 2002, he made a point of conducting an on-the-spot survey of Hokkaido himself as part of the LDP's input into the new Rice Policy Reform Outline (*Kome Seisaku Kaikaku Taikô*). Other agricultural heavyweights went to other prefectures. Furthermore, 'the [bribery] affair involved Matsuoka's closest business link where he also had a classmate, so of course, he was going to fret. I don't think it was a coincidence that he "took refuge" in hospital the day after the Yamarin reports.'³⁰⁷

Matsuoka's office admitted that Matsuoka was a former classmate of Akahori of Yamarin and that through Matsuoka's period of attachment in Hokkaido, the relationship was such that 'Matsuoka was supported by Akahori'.³⁰⁸ However, the office elaborated

[w]ith respect to the donation, it is said that (Yamarin) came to the office on 5 or 6 August 1998, but since it was a problem of people cutting down other people's trees, we would have not accepted it, even if there were an offer of a donation. We do not keep a record or list of visitors here at the office so (the visit and the donation) cannot be confirmed.³⁰⁹

In March 1999, Matsuoka reportedly travelled to Hokkaido to support the election of Hokkaido Prefecture assembly member, Yamada Rintarô, who was the eldest son of President Yamada, in his bid for a second term. One local political personage commented

[t]he rally for Yamada Rintarô was splendidly conducted at Culture Hall in Obihiro City. First, the support video by Muneo was put on the screen, and subsequently, Matsuoka said: 'Well, I came to act on behalf of Suzuki Muneo. I am the first follower, Matsuoka'. At the rally, local forestry office executives lined up in a row in an anteroom, and all the executives kowtowed to Matsuoka. It seemed as if the rally was also a lobbying rally by forestry persons to Matsuoka. However, Matsuoka's support had the opposite effect to what was intended. The district was the electoral district of Nakagawa Shôichi (the first-born son of the late

Nakagawa Ichirô), who was an old enemy of Muneo. (In such a district), support from Matsuoka (Muneo's friend) had a rather negative impact on the election campaign. Because of Matsuoka's support, Yamada Rintarô lost the election.³¹⁰

The scandal involving Yamarin was one of the scandals that ultimately felled Muneo. There was an order from the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office to the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office to 'get Muneo, no matter what'.³¹¹ Suzuki had received an 'unlawful request' from Yamarin and obtained a substantial amount of money in return. Even 'though it was a formal political donation, like the Recruit scandal involving former Chief Cabinet Secretary, Fujinami Takao, a corruption case can be made if a donation can be linked to a specific request. The Special Investigation Department [of the Public Prosecutors Office] was clearly aiming for a case of mediation bribery.'³¹²

Three of Suzuki's aides were also arrested 'on suspicion of failing to declare around ¥100 million in donations to Suzuki's political fund management group. All three were suspected of violating the Political Funds Control Law.'³¹³ They were all previously secretaries of Nakagawa Ichirô, and after Nakagawa committed suicide, they transferred to Suzuki when he successfully ran for Nakagawa's seat. Prosecutors were also poised to charge Suzuki himself with 'instructing his aides to conceal the donations.'³¹⁴

Muneo left the LDP under a cloud in March 2002 but remained a Diet member in spite of a Diet resolution urging him to give up his seat.³¹⁵ He was arrested on 19 June 2002 on suspicion of the crime of accepting bribes for mediation (*assen shûwaizai*).³¹⁶ Asada, however, continued to act as his patron, providing him with a car to his office right in the middle of the scandal.³¹⁷ Moreover, Matsuoka was summoned as a witness in the investigation of Suzuki, and afterwards, he was given a 'thank you' party by Suzuki.³¹⁸

The ramifications of Muneo's arrest went far and wide and also caught Matsuoka potentially in the net. There were reports that Matsuoka would be next to be taken to court for committing a mediation bribery crime in relation to both Yamarin and the BSE issue.³¹⁹

The day after the scandal broke in the *Yomiuri*, Matsuoka disappeared. It was later disclosed that he had gone to hospital for haemorrhoid surgery.³²⁰ The Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office investigated Matsuoka as a witness to the Yamarin affair and the circumstances of the Yamarin donation to Matsuoka but decided not to prosecute. It was a huge relief for Matsuoka. He

telephoned one of his influential supporters in his electoral district and said, '[e]verything is over. We do not have to worry any more'.³²¹

At the same time, reports surfaced that an important private secretary of Matsuoka, 'K'—his 'Satô Saburô'—had escaped overseas.³²² Rumours also surfaced of a flood of politically defamatory literature about Matsuoka in Nagata-chô. Local news section reporters were rushing from place to place to get the information.³²³

Muneo's arrest and Matsuoka's patent difficulties had implications that went well beyond the Yamarin scandal itself. As a veteran political reporter from a national newspaper explained

[i]n the city [newspaper] desk way of thinking, arresting a House of Representatives member over a ¥5 million bribery is a 'small incident', but it is a 'big incident' for Nagata-chô. This is because Diet members' daily political activities under certain circumstances are equivalent to 'accepting bribes for mediation'.³²⁴

The Suzuki case set a stricter benchmark for judging what did and did not constitute political bribery, which would be prosecuted under the Political Funds Regulation Law. As a political journalist explained

[p]reviously, political pressure from *zoku giin* when they mediated for companies was not considered to amount to a crime of bribery if the money were legally processed in conformity with the Political Funds Regulation Law. It was a system for receiving money lawfully by which they solicited political donations from a large number of companies and groups in small amounts over a long term. However, by making Muneo's case a criminal case, even if the money provided by companies were reported to Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications as political funds, the money was recognised as constituting bribery. This is an epoch-making decision by the Special Investigation Department. This is the essence of the Yamarin scandal... The major premise, on which the money that was received was skilfully and legally processed, collapsed. This great change had an impact on Nagata-cho.³²⁵

In 'arresting Suzuki, the Special Investigation Department of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office handed down a "no" to the old method of political funding'.³²⁶ Even though formal (and even reported) donations might be involved, a corruption case could be made if the donation could be linked to a specific request.³²⁷ Henceforth, the major premise of activities where the route of mediation went from companies to politicians to government offices collapsed.³²⁸

This was not the only repercussion from the Yamarin affair. People speculated about who would be taking the lead in the sorts of agricultural policy areas in which Suzuki specialised, such as price decisions, and about future power relations

between the MAFF and *nôrin giin*.³²⁹ By leaving the LDP, a decline in Muneo's power in relation to bureaucrats and policy decisions was unavoidable, given his substantial influence over the MAFF and also over MoFA.³³⁰

While Muneo's arrest for accepting bribes from Yamarin caused huge ripples, in reality, however, it was Muneo's friend, his sworn brother, Matsuoka, who exercised enormous power over those connected to the Hokkaido forestry industry.³³¹ As the president of a reforestation company in Ohihiro, Hokkaido, commented

Matsuoka, who is from the Forestry Agency, is an extremely influential presence for the Hokkaido forestry industry...He has experience as chief of the Teshio Forestry Office in Hokkaido when he was a young bureaucrat of the Forestry Agency. He was only in his mid-30s, but local businesses treated this chief-of-office from the central Forestry Agency as a precious guest. The executives in the forestry office and the central Forestry Agency were valued contacts for the forestry businesses, so of course, they were treated well.³³²

Nevertheless, after the Yamarin episode, Matsuoka hunkered down and went pretty quiet. His appearances on the TV program 'Sunday Project' (*Asahi* National Broadcasting), on which, at one time, he appeared regularly as a representative of the 'resistance forces' (*teikô seiryoku*) to Prime Minister Koizumi³³³ declined as criticism of Muneo increased.³³⁴ As the media commented, '[r]ecently, Matsuoka is quite silent in Nagata-chô. His and Muneo's high-handed methods have become unacceptable. The significance of Muneo's arrest was that their "methods" were possibly becoming illegal.'³³⁵ Somebody else said that

[i]n a sense, Matsuoka was like a mudskipper in Isahaya Bay. The water level in the bay had sunk after the water gates on the dyke to the bay were built, and the mudskipper dried up after his environment was degraded. It is a really ironical consequence for Matsuoka, who supports the development of Isahaya Bay land reclamation by drainage (laughter).³³⁶

THE ACTIVITIES AND WHEREABOUTS OF MR 'A', OR IS IT MR 'K'? ³³⁷

When the Yamarin scandal broke and investigations were underway, the movements of one of Matsuoka's close advisors attracted attention in Kumamoto. This person (referred to only as a 'Mr A') apparently disappeared, and speculation was rife about whether he had truly disappeared or was in hospital. Mr A had reputedly supported Matsuoka since he first went into politics, and had, at one time, even served as chief of his Kumamoto electoral office.³³⁸ A staff member of Matsuoka's office in Kumamoto City confirmed

that the current (2002) job description of Secretary 'A' was 'LDP Kumamoto (3) Branch Office Chief'.³³⁹

According to a person knowledgeable about local politics in Kumamoto

[Mr A] rides expensive cars, and is very influential. In particular, he is strong in the Kyushu Agricultural Administration Bureau, although he has a bossy tone and has many enemies. There were even accusations within Matsuoka's *kôenkai* that 'A' was mediating deals and meddling, and prefectural assembly members linked to Matsuoka protested loudly about it at a meeting.³⁴⁰

Mr A's business card later showed that he was no longer Matsuoka's branch office chief, but described himself as a 'consultant' to Matsuoka's *kôenkai*.³⁴¹ An executive of Matsuoka's *kôenkai* said, 'I don't know what he is doing now. I don't like that guy. He reeks of concessions (*riken*). I always thought he was a dodgy type.'³⁴²

When journalists asked Matsuoka's Kumamoto office about Mr A, they said, '[h]e hasn't disappeared, but I don't know when he will next come to the office. I don't know whether he is the office chief. I don't even know whether he has the business cards of advisor [to Matsuoka]'.³⁴³ The Diet did not know of his whereabouts either.

In 2000, a report surfaced of a heated confrontation that took place in Kumamoto Castle Hotel between Araki Katsutoshi on the one hand, and Matsuoka and Secretary 'A' on the other.³⁴⁴ Araki had formed the Matsuoka faction (i.e. those who followed Matsuoka) in the prefectural assembly. The faction was called the Matsushôkai, meaning the Matsuoka 'Winning' Association. Araki served as chairman of that association and was seen as the most influential supporter of Matsuoka in that region.³⁴⁵ Araki was formerly co-president of Araki Group constructions, which was a joint-stock construction company. The Araki Group's main company headquarters and Araki's residence was in Shisui Town in Kikuchi County, which was located in Matsuoka's constituency of Kumamoto (3). Araki admitted that 'it might be possible that the Araki Group had raised money for Matsuoka'.³⁴⁶

At this meeting, however, Araki was upbraiding both Matsuoka and Mr A, his secretary. Araki was saying

Matsuoka, are you making him do it, or is 'A'-kun doing it on his own accord? If we take money from companies, we will get a bad reputation. We can't get sufficient votes even though we're trying hard, and the reason is because you guys are taking money from business people. If this is the case, I can't support this.³⁴⁷

In short, Araki was berating both Matsuoka and Mr A for the way they were collecting political funds, although he did not touch at all on why he accused the two of such things.³⁴⁸ The occasion was a breakfast meeting of the Matsuoka 'Winning' Association being held at the hotel. Of the 56 prefectural assembly members, 10 were present. Because Araki was angry, the whole place became deathly silent. Secretary 'A' made a statement denying that he had taken such action, but there was a short interval of silence. Matsuoka kept his mouth shut. Those present were impressed by Araki's courage, and word of the incident immediately spread to the construction company world in the prefecture. Araki became chairman of the prefectural assembly after this, and stopped being chairman of the Matsuoka 'Winning' Association. However, he remained the leading light of the Matsuoka faction.³⁴⁹

Later in 2002, 'details of a bribery case in Fukuoka District Court uncovered a memo written by the chairman of a construction firm in Fukuoka Prefecture. The memo revealed that ¥300 million in cash had been handed to a secretary of Matsuoka'.³⁵⁰ The chairman was being charged with a different bribery case, and was later found guilty. The court judged, however, that the memo was highly reliable. Matsuoka's secretary later told the press, 'I don't remember whether I met him [the chairman]. That's absolutely groundless'.³⁵¹

AFTERWORD ON SUZUKI

When Muneo split with the LDP in early 2002, the National Nokyô Council in a commentary summed up the particular attributes of Muneo, viz., 'putting pressure on bureaucrats, guiding benefits to local regions and collecting political funds in a way that invited suspicion'.³⁵² It added that the people had said a resounding 'No' to these kinds of political methods and that Suzuki had been virtually drummed out of the LDP because of what many saw as his objectionable behaviour.³⁵³

However, it takes more than political oblivion and a prison sentence to keep a politician like Suzuki down. After his release from prison, he was quoted as saying that a Diet member is the representative of his region and that there was nothing wrong in arranging favours and getting advantages for local districts.³⁵⁴ His political career was resurrected in the 2005 Lower House election and he returned to the Diet as head of the New Party Mother Earth.³⁵⁵ He succeeded only in the Hokkaido PR bloc, which means that he has no local district as such, but can work for industries and companies based in the prefecture.

Although it is difficult to gauge Suzuki's status and future at this point, given that it is customary for corrupt politicians to leave the LDP, get re-elected (as a kind of cleansing process) and come back as cleanskins, he may be able to revive his political fortunes. On the other hand, Suzuki's power will be limited by the fact that he is out of the LDP and is only a second-ranking PR politician from a minor party.

Moreover, MoFA has no wish to return to the bad old days. After Suzuki was re-elected, it issued a formal manual instructing the ministry's officials on how to handle Suzuki. The manual, entitled 'How to deal with Lower House member Muneo Suzuki', urged officials not to dine with Suzuki and to submit a report whenever they met him.³⁵⁶ Suzuki and his aides reacted strongly to the ministry's moves, saying '[w]e will reveal the true state of the Foreign Ministry and ministry bureaucrats'.³⁵⁷

NOTES

- 1 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu no Rirekisho'. Available from <http://www.matsuokatoshikatsu.org/site002//public/008.html>
- 2 Hasegawa, 'Kanjūdanomi no Hazama de Shundō', p. 24.
- 3 'Nishi no "Muneo" Matsuoka Toshikatsu wa Kisha "I" o "Gokiburi ika" to Kimetsuketa' ["Muneo" of the West Matsuoka Toshikatsu Asserts Journalist "I" is "Lower than a Cockroach"], *Shūkan Bunshun*, 27 March 2003, p. 29.
- 4 'Nishi no "Muneo" Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 29.
- 5 See below.
- 6 'Kinkyū Nyūin shita', p. 28. See also below.
- 7 Hasegawa, 'Nōsuishō o Haishi seyo', pp. 35–36.
- 8 'Nishi no Muneo: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku' ['Muneo of the West: The Extremely Evil Personal Connections that Surround Matsuoka Toshikatsu'], *Shūkan Bunshun*, 21 March 2002, p. 167.
- 9 See <http://www.nouminren.ne.jp/dat/200208/2002081202.htm>
- 10 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 184.
- 11 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 99.
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 'Kinkyū Nyūin shita', p. 27.
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 99.
- 16 *ibid.*, p. 98.
- 17 'Kinkyū Nyūin shita', p. 26.
- 18 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 99.
- 19 *ibid.*, p. 94.
- 20 *ibid.*, p. 99.
- 21 See <http://www.nouminren.ne.jp/dat/200208/2002081202.htm>
- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 94.

- 24 Itô Hirotoishi, “Muneo no Meiyû” no Arata na Taidô: Matsuoka Toshikatsu ga Shikakeru Kokka Purojekuto o Oe’ [‘The New Movements of “Muneo’s Sworn Friend”: Follow the State Project that Matsuoka Toshikatsu is Going to Do’], *Gendai*, June 2004, p. 287.
- 25 Itô comments that formerly amongst the *nôrin zoku*, there were many *abarenbô*, such as Watanabe Michio, but that they had become weaker with the demise of Japanese agriculture. ‘Heisei Jiken Fuairu: Nôrin Jigyô Hojokin o Dokusen Suru Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 64.
- 26 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 95.
- 27 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 26.
- 28 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 103.
- 29 Itô, ‘Heisei Jiken Fuairu: Nôrin Jigyô Hojokin o Dokusen Suru Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 64.
- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 Hashimoto Naoyuki, ‘Letter from Yochomachi’, Posted 11 September 2005. Available from http://homepage.mac.com/naoyuki_hashimoto/iblog/C47j8131471...
- 32 In Kamei’s electorate of Hiroshima (6), there are two stations where the Shinkansen stops. He is famous for building big roads that few cars use, as well as bridges and gigantic dams. These are criticised as being of no use to the local people, but constructed for the benefit of local general contractors with the country’s money. See http://www.ch-sakura.jp/bbs_thread.php?ID=224796&GENRE=sougou
- 33 See <http://picard.blog.bai.ne.jp/?eid=14991>
- 34 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 100.
- 35 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 26.
- 36 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, pp. 183–84.
- 37 ‘Seijika o Katte ni Kenkyû Suru: Matsuoka Toshikatsu’ [‘Researching Politicians Arbitrarily: Toshikatsu Matsuoka’], *Yûkan Fuji News*, 9 August 2000. Available from <http://www.fujinews.com/today/2000-08/20000809/0809-08.htm>
- 38 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 100.
- 39 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 184.
- 40 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 103.
- 41 *ibid.*
- 42 *ibid.*, p. 105.
- 43 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 184.
- 44 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 94.
- 45 ‘Nishi no “Muneo”’, p. 38. One local inn owner in Matsuoka’s electorate also dubbed him ‘Muneo Suzuki of the West’ (*Nishi no Suzuki Muneo*). Hasegawa, ‘Jimin “Gajô” no Chikaku Hendô’, p. 27.
- 46 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 26.
- 47 *ibid.*
- 48 Kokita Kiyohito, ‘Suzuki Muneo no Tsukurareta’ [‘How Suzuki Muneo was Made’], *Aera*, 18 February 2002, p. 19.
- 49 ‘Suzuki Muneo ni Dôkatsu saretai Jisatsu shita Nôsuishô Kyaria Kanryô’ [‘The MAFF Career Bureaucrat Threatened by Suzuki Muneo Who Committed Suicide’], *Shûkan Bunshun*, 21 February 2002, pp. 26–27.
- 50 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 82.
- 51 ‘Hirasawa Katsuei Vs Matsuoka Toshikatsu: “Makiko-Muneo” no Dairi Senso’ [‘Hirasawa Katsuei Versus Matsuoka Toshikatsu: “The Makiko-Muneo” Proxy War’], *Shûkan Shinchô*, 21 February 2002, p. 45.
- 52 ‘Hirasawa Katsuei Vs Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 45.
- 53 ‘Hirasawa Katsuei Vs Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 45.
- 54 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 26.
- 55 *Tokyo Shinbun*, 3 August 2005.
- 56 ‘Hirasawa Katsuei Vs Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 44.

- 57 *ibid.*
- 58 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', pp. 100–1. Matsuoka's motives were attributed to his desire to repay favours back to Nokyo and to sell old rice at retail prices. See <http://piza.2ch.net/giin/kako/987/987905181.html>
- 59 Absent was Matsuoka's old arch-enemy, Uozumi Hirohide, a member of the House of Councillors at the time.
- 60 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 99.
- 61 Itô Hiroto, 'Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai "Gyuniku Giso" no Anbu' ['The Black Spots of the "Beef Camouflage" that the Newspapers Absolutely Don't Report'], *Gendai*, October 2002, p. 82.
- 62 'Suzuki Muneo Giin no Ritô to Sono Yoha' ['Suzuki Muneo Diet Member's Split From the Party and its Aftermath'], *Nôsei Undô Jyânaru*, No. 42, April 2002, p. 1.
- 63 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 101.
- 64 Satô Masaru, 2005. *Kokka no Wana: Gaimushô no Rasupuchi to Yobarete* [National Trap: The So-Called Rasputin of the Foreign Ministry], Shinchôsha, Tokyo.
- 65 Reed, Steven R., 'Revelations About Suzuki Muneo', 13 March 2002. Available from ssj-forum@iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp
- 66 Hasegawa, 'Nôsuishô o Haishi seyo', p. 36.
- 67 *ibid.*
- 68 *ibid.*
- 69 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 186.
- 70 Nakanishi, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 29.
- 71 *ibid.*
- 72 'Matsuoka Daigishi ni Hisho no Taishokukin', p. 15.
- 73 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 46.
- 74 'Hini Kaku "Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi" no Patoron', p. 59.
- 75 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 47.
- 76 *ibid.*
- 77 'Seiji Shikin Zenkoku Chôsa Kekka'. Available from <http://www.asahi.com/paper/special/shikin>
- 78 *ibid.*
- 79 Reed, 'Revelations'. Available from ssj-forum@iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp
- 80 'Seiji Shikin Pâtî ga Dai Seikyô' ['Great Success of Political Funds Parties']. Available from <http://www.kenkin.com/etcetra/sikinparty.html>
- 81 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 186.
- 82 Nakanishi, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 29.
- 83 Ishii, 'Nôsuishô Osen', p. 194.
- 84 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 48. The dates are not given but it is assumed that the years were 1996–2001.
- 85 *ibid.*
- 86 'Nishi no "Muneo"', p. 39.
- 87 For example, the association received subsidies of ¥35.4 billion to 'contribute technological development and data necessary for drawing up plans for forestry management in tropical rainforests'. Ishii, 'Nôsuishô Osen', p. 195.
- 88 *ibid.*, p. 194.
- 89 See <http://www.nouminren.ne.jp/dat/200208/2002081202.htm>. See also Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 179.
- 90 This organisation was established in 1946 as a *gaikaku dantai* of the Forestry Agency for the purpose of developing the forestry industry and undertaking welfare works for the staff and retired officials of the Forestry Agency. See also Table 6.1.
- 91 Itô, 'Heisei Jiken Fuairu: Nôrin Jigyô Hojokin o Dokusen Suru Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 65.
- 92 *ibid.*
- 93 *ibid.*

- 94 Ishii, 'Nôsuishô Osen', p. 193.
- 95 *ibid.*
- 96 Nishikawa, 'Tako Tsubo', p. 48.
- 97 Ishii, 'Nôsuishô Osen', p. 196.
- 98 *ibid.*, p. 197.
- 99 *ibid.*
- 100 *ibid.*, p. 194.
- 101 *ibid.*, p. 195.
- 102 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 47.
- 103 Politicians must submit such a report to MIAC at the end of September each year.
- 104 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 186.
- 105 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 104.
- 106 'Hini Kaku "Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi" no Patoron', p. 58.
- 107 *ibid.*
- 108 *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 109 *ibid.*, pp. 58–59.
- 110 *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 111 JCP Lower House member Ozawa Kazuaki survey. Available from <http://www.nouminren.ne.jp/dat/200208/2002081202.htm>
- 112 'Hini Kaku "Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi" no Patoron', p. 59.
- 113 Under the Political Funds Control Law, the donation threshold at which the name of the donor must be disclosed is ¥50,000.
- 114 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 47.
- 115 The table was obtained from Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 48.
- 116 The Forestry Benefit Association, also on the above list, claimed that it did not associate with Matsuoka after 1999. Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 48.
- 117 'Matsuoka Daigishi ni Hisho no Taishokukin', p. 15. See also below.
- 118 Nakanishi, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 29.
- 119 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 48.
- 120 The table was obtained from Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 48.
- 121 This information was revealed in the LDP's Kumamoto No. 3 Electoral District Branch revenue and expenditure report. Nakanishi, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 29.
- 122 Nakanishi, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 29.
- 123 *ibid.*
- 124 The table was obtained from Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 49.
- 125 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 49.
- 126 *ibid.*
- 127 *Sankei Shinbun*, 30 September 2005.
- 128 'Matsuoka Daigishi ni Hisho no Taishokukin', p. 15.
- 129 *ibid.* All secretaries of Lower House members are automatically relieved of their posts when the house is dissolved, but are automatically rehired within 40 days of the election, if a form is submitted. Beyond that deadline, they are deemed automatically retired, and their retirement allowance is paid.
- 130 'Matsuoka Daigishi ni Hisho no Taishokukin', p. 15.
- 131 *ibid.*
- 132 *ibid.*
- 133 *ibid.*
- 134 *ibid.*
- 135 *ibid.*
- 136 The state subsidises three secretaries for each Diet member.
- 137 'Matsuoka Daigishi ni Hisho no Taishokukin', p. 15.
- 138 Nakanishi, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 28.

- 139 *Yûkan Fuji News*. Available from <http://www.fujinews.com/today/2000-08/20000809/0809-08.htm>.
 140 *ibid.*
 141 *ibid.*
 142 'Seijika o Katte ni Kenkyû Suru'. Available from <http://www.fujinews.com/today/2000-08/20000809/0809-08.htm>
 143 *Yûkan Fuji News*. Available from <http://www.fujinews.com/today/2000-08/20000809/0809-08.htm>
 144 *ibid.*
 145 Nakanishi, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu', p. 29.
 146 *ibid.*, p. 28.
 147 Editorial Group, Ushiroda Ryôe, 'Okinawa de Mitsuketa Umami' ['The Allure Found in Okinawa'], *Aera*, 11 March 2002, p. 16.
 148 "'Nishi no Muneo'", p. 38.
 149 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 186.
 150 'Matsuoka Daigishi ni Hisho no Taishokukin', p. 15.
 151 Hasegawa, 'Kanjudanomi no Hazama de Shundô', p. 24.
 152 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 46.
 153 *ibid.*, pp. 46 and 48.
 154 It was ¥2 million. Kitamatsu *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 48.
 155 'Nishi no Muneo: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku', p. 167.
 156 Kitamatsu *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 49.
 157 *ibid.*, p. 48.
 158 Reed, 'Revelations'. Available from ssj-forum@iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 159 Reed, Steven R., 'More Muneo', 20 March 2002. Available from ssj-forum@iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 160 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 186.
 161 See <http://www.nouminren.ne.jp/dat/200208/2002081202.htm>
 162 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 180.
 163 *ibid.*
 164 See also Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', pp. 180–82.
 165 "'Nishi no Muneo'", p. 39.
 166 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 180.
 167 Satô Saburô was Katô Kôichi's secretary, to whom he was extremely close, and who was prosecuted for evading taxes amounting to ¥100 million. Katô put a lot of trust in Satô, who was like his double. Katô was reported as saying, 'what Sato says, you can think of as being said by me', although he denied being involved in Satô's tax evasion scandal. 'Katô Kôichi yo Semete Muneo yori Hayaku Yamenasai' ['Katô Kôichi, You Need At Least to Resign Earlier Than Muneo'], *Shûkan Bunshun*, 21 March 2002, p. 166.
 168 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 186.
 169 "'Nishi no Muneo'", p. 39.
 170 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 182.
 171 "'Nishi no Muneo'", p. 39.
 172 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 182.
 173 *ibid.*
 174 *ibid.*
 175 'Sôsa Shinsa Repôto: Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu—Kesareta Shokuniku Rûto' ['Report from the Depths of the Criminal Investigation: Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu—The Meat Route that Has Been Wiped Out'], *Shûkan Bunshun*, 19 September 2002, p. 150.
 176 Hasegawa, 'Nôsuishô o Haishi seyo', p. 38.
 177 *ibid.* For a similar account of institutional factors within the MAFF, which were responsible for the BSE outbreak in Japan, see 'Nôsuishô "Chikusan Riken": Inamikitta "Niku" to "Uma" Gyôsei' ['The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' "Livestock Concessions"'] The Totally Denied "Meat" and

- “Horse” Administration’], *Sentakū*, May 2002, pp. 126–29.
- 178 Ayukawa, ‘Jimintô’, p. 20.
- 179 *ibid.*
- 180 *ibid.*
- 181 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 84.
- 182 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 101.
- 183 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 150.
- 184 The Meat and Egg Division of the Livestock Department of the Production Bureau had official responsibility for administering the beef industry.
- 185 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 101.
- 186 Ayukawa, ‘Jimintô’, p. 20.
- 187 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 150.
- 188 ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 189 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 150.
- 190 *ibid.*, p. 150.
- 191 ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 192 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 101.
- 193 *ibid.*, pp. 101–2.
- 194 *ibid.*, p. 102.
- 195 Ayukawa, ‘Jimintô’, p. 20.
- 196 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 102.
- 197 Ayukawa, ‘Jimintô’, p. 20.
- 198 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 82.
- 199 ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 200 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 83.
- 201 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 151.
- 202 Ayukawa, ‘Jimintô’, p. 20.
- 203 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 151.
- 204 *ibid.*, p. 150; ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 205 ‘Nôgyô Kankei Seisaku Kettei no Ashidori’, *Nôsei Undô Jyânaru*, No. 42, April 2002, p. 29.
- 206 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 150.
- 207 ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 208 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, p. 102.
- 209 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 150.
- 210 ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 211 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 152.
- 212 Asada was implicated in a corruption scandal involving the Livestock Industry Promotion Corporation in 1987, and was arrested on suspicion of bribery. Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 76.
- 213 *ibid.*, p. 82.
- 214 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 152.
- 215 ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 216 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 82.
- 217 ‘Sôsa Shinsa Repôto’, p. 152.
- 218 Hasegawa Hiroshi, ‘Kokusan Gyûniku Kaiage no Nazo’ [‘The Mystery of the Buy-up of Domestic Beef’], *Aera*, 8 July 2002, p. 22.
- 219 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 77. See also ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 220 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 77.
- 221 *ibid.*, p. 77.
- 222 ‘Nôsuishô “Chikusan Riken”’, p. 127.
- 223 Itô, ‘Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai’, p. 77.
- 224 Hasegawa, ‘Kokusan Gyûniku Kaiage no Nazo’, p. 21.

- 225 Itô, 'Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai', p. 77.
- 226 'Sôsa Shinsa Repôto', p. 151.
- 227 *ibid.*
- 228 *ibid.*, p. 152.
- 229 *ibid.*
- 230 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Hannan nado Giwaku Sanseki' ['Suspensions Accumulate About Diet Member Matsuoka Toshikatsu Such As Hannan'], *Kokumin Shinbun*, July 2002. Available from <http://www5f.biglobe.ne.jp/~kokumin-shinbun/H14/1407/140769matsuoka.html>
- 231 He was later sentenced to seven years in prison.
- 232 *The Japan Times*, 27 June 2004; 28 August 2004.
- 233 *ibid.*, 21 August 2004.
- 234 *ibid.*, 27 June 2004.
- 235 *ibid.*, 21 August 2004.
- 236 *ibid.*, 24 April 2004.
- 237 *ibid.* 28 May, 2005.
- 238 *ibid.*, 23 April 2004.
- 239 'Posuto "Muneo Sôsa" no Shôten e: Tokusôbu ga Kanshin o Motsu Matsuoka Toshikatsu no "Kôdô"' ['The Focus of the Post "Muneo Investigation": The "Action" of Matsuoka Toshikatsu in Which the Special Investigation Department Has an Interest'], *Themis*, July 2002, p. 35.
- 240 *ibid.*
- 241 *ibid.*
- 242 *ibid.*
- 243 Ayukawa, 'Jimintô', p. 20.
- 244 *ibid.*
- 245 *ibid.*
- 246 According to another source, this was the Supreme Court, not the High Court. *Tokyo Shinbun*, 20 February 2002.
- 247 These details were obtained from 'Nishi no Muneo: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku Amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku', p. 167.
- 248 'Muneo "Waido": "Usotsuki Toshu Otokô" to Kakarete Honshi o Utaeta "Suzuki Muneo" no Sente Shisaku' ['Muneo "Wide Show": Having Written That He Was an Habitual Liar', The Failed First Move of "Suzuki Muneo" in Suing Our Magazine'], *Shûkan Shinchô*, 14 March 2002, p. 48.
- 249 Tanikawa retired from the Lower House in 2003.
- 250 'Nishi no Muneo: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku Amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku' p. 167. He also reportedly said: 'Keep your hands off because this property (building) has been settled politically, and the Foreign Ministry knows it.' *Tokyo Shinbun*, 20 February 2002.
- 251 *Tokyo Shinbun*, 20 February 2002.
- 252 'Nishi no Muneo: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku Amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku', p. 167.
- 253 'Muneo "Waido"', p. 48.
- 254 'Nishi no Muneo: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku Amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku', p. 167.
- 255 *ibid.*
- 256 'Muneo "Waido"', p. 48.
- 257 *ibid.*
- 258 *Tokyo Shinbun*, 20 February 2002.
- 259 The list of people attending the dinner party varies depending on the source. See also *Tokyo Shinbun*, 20 February 2002.
- 260 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', pp. 95–98.
- 261 'Muneo "Waido"', p. 48.
- 262 *ibid.*
- 263 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, 'Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu', pp. 95–98.
- 264 'Muneo "Waido"', p. 49.

- 265 *ibid.*
 266 *Tokyo Shinbun*, 20 February 2002.
 267 *ibid.*
 268 “Nishi no Muneo”: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku Amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku’, p. 167.
 269 Nakanishi and Special Reporting Group, ‘Suzuki Muneo, Matsuoka Toshikatsu’, pp. 95–98.
 270 “Nishi no Muneo”: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku Amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku’, p. 167.
 271 *ibid.*
 272 *ibid.* See also below.
 273 Yamarin’s main office is in Obihiro City in Hokkaido. It is a leading timber company, built up over the lifetime of its president, Yamada Isao. Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 179.
 274 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 28.
 275 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 180.
 276 *ibid.*, p. 179.
 277 *ibid.*, pp. 179–80.
 278 ‘Posuto “Muneo Sôsa”’, p. 34.
 279 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 179.
 280 *The Japan Times*, 27 June 2002.
 281 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 179.
 282 “Muneo no Bôrei”, p. 28.
 283 “Nishi no Muneo”, p. 39.
 284 *The Japan Times*, 27 June 2002.
 285 *ibid.*
 286 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 180.
 287 See <http://www.nouminren.ne.jp/dat/200208/2002081202.htm>
 288 See <http://news.kyodo.co.jp/kyodonews/2002/suzuki/news/20020626-492.html>
 289 *The Japan Times*, 22 June 2002.
 290 *ibid.*
 291 ‘Posuto “Muneo Sôsa”’, p. 34.
 292 *The Japan Times*, 22 June 2002.
 293 “Nishi no Muneo”, p. 38.
 294 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 28.
 295 Itô, “Muneo no Meiyû” no Arata na Taidô’, p. 286.
 296 ‘Sukûpu! Mitsui Bussan Kanbu Shain o Taiho: Chiken Tokusôbu ga Jimintô Daigishi Futari o Chôshu’ [‘Scoop! The Arrest of Mitsui Co. Executives: The Special Investigation Department of the Public Prosecutor’s Office Listens to Two LDP Diet Members’], *Shûkan Gendai*, 20 July 2002, p. 55.
 297 ‘Posuto “Muneo Sôsa”’, p. 34.
 298 Itô, “Muneo no Meiyû” no Arata na Taidô’, p. 288.
 299 *ibid.*
 300 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 179.
 301 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 27.
 302 *ibid.*
 303 Kokita, ‘Suzuki Muneo no Tsukurareta’, p. 19.
 304 ‘Kinkyû Nyûin shita’, p. 28.
 305 *ibid.*
 306 *ibid.*
 307 *ibid.*
 308 *ibid.*
 309 *ibid.*
 310 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, ‘Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin’, p. 178.

- 311 Itô , 'Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai', p. 82.
 312 'Posuto "Muneo Sôsa"', p. 34.
 313 *The Japan Times*, 24 July 2002.
 314 *ibid.*
 315 *ibid.*
 316 Suzuki was subsequently accused of four crimes, including accepting a bribe in return for services promised and accepting a bribe as a mediator. On 5 November 2004, he was convicted in the Tokyo District Court on all charges and sentenced to a two-year prison term and a fine of ¥11 million. The chief judge stated that 'although the defendant held an important post in the cabinet and was expected to show a high degree of morals and honesty, he took a bribe from his supporters in order to pursue his own interests and betrayed the citizens' trust. In spite of this, he dared to make false statements in the criminal investigation and in the trial. Therefore, he should face a goal sentence.' *Asahi Shinbun*, 5 November 2004. Suzuki stood unsuccessfully in the July 2004 Upper House election, having been forced to resign his Lower House Diet seat in 2002. He successfully regained a seat in the Lower House in September 2005. See below.
 317 Itô, 'Shinbun ga Zettai ni Hojinai', p. 77.
 318 'Nishi no Muneo: Matsuoka Toshikatsu o Torimaku amari ni Kuroi Jinmyaku', p. 167.
 319 'Muneo no Meiyû "Matsuoka Toshikatsu" Jr. no Igai na Kekkon Aite' ['The Unexpected Marriage Partner of Muneo's Sworn Friend "Matsuoka Toshikatsu" Jr.'], *Shûkan Shinchô*, 28 November 2002, p. 32.
 320 'Kinkyû Nyûin shita', p. 27.
 321 Nakanishi Akihiko and the Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 178.
 322 *Rondan, Kisha Kurabu* [Discussion, Press Club]. Available from <http://www.rondan.co.jp/html/kisha/0206/020625-3.html>. Refer to the discussion concerning Mr 'A'.
 323 *ibid.*
 324 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 178.
 325 *ibid.*
 326 Kitamatsu, *et al.*, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu Daigishi Tettei Bunseki', p. 46.
 327 'Posuto "Muneo Sôsa"', p. 34.
 328 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 178.
 329 'Suzuki Muneo Giin no Ritô', p. 1.
 330 *ibid.*
 331 'Kinkyû Nyûin shita', p. 26.
 332 *ibid.*, p. 27.
 333 See Chapter 7 on 'Electoral Vicissitudes'.
 334 Itô, "'Muneo no Meiyû" no Arata na Taidô', p. 288.
 335 Nakanishi and Journal Reporter Group, 'Matsuoka Toshikatsu to Iu Giwaku Nin', p. 179.
 336 *ibid.*
 337 It is unclear whether Mr 'A' is the same as Mr 'K'. Certainly there are strong similarities. The investigative journal might have used Mr 'A' in the sense of Mr 'A' and Mr 'B', that is, in order to preserve his anonymity.
 338 "'Nishi no Muneo"', p. 39.
 339 Hasegawa, 'Kanjûdanomi no Hazama de Shundô', p. 24.
 340 "'Nishi no Muneo"', p. 39.
 341 *ibid.*
 342 *ibid.*
 343 *ibid.*
 344 Hasegawa, 'Kanjûdanomi no Hazama de Shundô', p. 23.
 345 *ibid.*
 346 *ibid.*, p. 24.

347 *ibid.*, p. 23.

348 *ibid.*

349 *ibid.*

350 *Sankei Shinbun*, 24 September 2002.

351 *ibid.*

352 'Suzuki Muneo Giin no Ritô', p. 1.

353 *ibid.*

354 'Rieki Yûdô' ['Guiding Benefits'], Wikipedia. Available from <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%88%A9%E7%9B%8A%E8%AA%98%E5%B0%8E>

355 Its Japanese title is *Shintô Daichi*. The professed ideals of the party are 'to return to the land', 'to learn from the land', 'to respect nature and be thankful for it'. To achieve these goals 'reform of consciousness is necessary. Real reform is not from authority but from the people' (see <http://www.muneo.gr.jp>). Suzuki won 433,938 votes, slightly less than half the LDP's tally in the Hokkaido bloc. Muneo's party fielded two other candidates (both graduate students, one of which was an Ainu) in the Hokkaido regional bloc, but only Suzuki won a seat. It also fielded a candidate (a former Olympic ski-jumping athlete) in Hokkaido (1). He came last with 16,000 votes.

356 *Mainichi Shinbun*, 4 October 2005.

357 *ibid.*