

How the rise and fall of Ms.Tanaka was reported or
ignored in the English-language press
- case study of depth of analysis in news articles -

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1 . Introduction

Ms. Makiko Tanaka has been a woman of celebrity on the Japanese political scene for some time, not only because of the fact that she is the daughter of former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, but also because of her candid speech and straightforward manner of behavior which made her the most popular politician in Japan whom the public wants to become a prime minister. Her stint as Japan's foreign minister between late April 2001 and late January 2002 was a tumultuous period in her career as she continuously clashed with career Foreign Ministry (Gaimusho) officials who went all-out to defend their vested interests with the support from some ranking Liberal-Democratic Party politicians such as Mr. Muneo Suzuki. It may be fair to say that Ms. Tanaka was not able to demonstrate expertise in diplomacy, particularly in the difficult period following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, due partly to her animosity vis-à-vis top Foreign Ministry bureaucrats. But in the meantime, she devoted much of her energy in cleaning up the Gaimusho in the wake of a series of money scandals there.

In this thesis, we look at how the rise and fall of Ms. Tanaka was reported or virtually ignored in English-language newspapers and magazines both at home and abroad. If there is a difference, we will try to determine its cause . We shall also focus on the depth of analysis of each article. We will try to determine whether some of the articles, especially those in foreign newspapers were somewhat superficial or not.

We have picked up among newspapers the *Financial Times* (*FT*) of Britain, and the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*) and the *New York Times* (*NYT*) of the United States, as well as the *Japan Times* (*JT*). As for magazines, this thesis covers *The Economist* of

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Britain, as well as *Newsweek*, *Time* and *Business Week* (*BW*) of the United States. We can say that these are representative English-language newspapers and magazines in Japan as well as in the United States and Britain, as they are easily available at big public libraries in Tokyo.

In this thesis, we have focused on three periods concerning Ms. Tanaka's stint as foreign minister: the end of April 2001 when she took up the job; early November 2001 when calls demanding her resignation mounted; and late January 2002 when she actually stepped down. We had initially encountered difficulties in devising a proper yardstick for measuring depth of analysis, but finally came up with two kinds of yardsticks: length of the section devoted to analysis and if predictions were made, whether they proved correct or not.

2 . *The Financial Times and The Economist*

The *Financial Times* and *The Economist* apparently tried to report stories on Ms. Tanaka as accurately as possible. There was a seemingly sufficient amount of reporting.

2 .1 *FT*, April 2001

The *FT* was avidly interested in Ms. Tanaka from the time she was picked as Japan's foreign minister. In its April 27, 2001, issue, the *FT* in an article on the formation of the Koizumi cabinet reported that:

Another surprise move was the appointment of Makiko Tanaka as foreign minister. She is the outspoken daughter of Kakuei Tanaka, the former prime minister, and is highly popular. However, she is not known as a foreign policy expert and her appointment comes at a delicate time, as Japan-China relations have been deteriorating.

The *FT* also carried in the same issue a profile of Ms. Tanaka, pointing to her outspokenness and high popularity among the public.

She is sometimes dubbed Japan's answer to Britain's Margaret Thatcher. And it is a parallel that Makiko Tanaka, 57, seems happy to hear. In recent years, Ms Tanaka has not only become Japan's most famous politician but also one of the most outspoken of either sex. Her appointment as foreign minister yesterday marks her most senior role yet and propels her firmly into the international limelight.

But she is also renowned for being charismatic and an avid critic of corruption and party factions, which has made her highly popular with the public.

The anti-corruption stance is a touch ironic because her father was embroiled in a corruption scandal. But it appears to have been one reason for yesterday's appointment. For she is so popular with the public that her presence in the cabinet may help the LDP win summer elections.

But the *FT* was skeptical about Ms Tanaka's ability to lead the Gaimusho.

It is unclear quite what Ms. Tanaka's views on foreign policy are. Indeed, she has limited experience in the field, although she has spent considerable time in the US and speaks fluent English.

2.2 *FT*, October-November 2001

In late October and early November, when Koizumi had to think over whether to sack Tanaka, the *FT* carried several articles in the wake of a dispute between Ms. Tanaka and Foreign Ministry bureaucrats. In its Nov. 1 issue, the *FT* wrote that:

"I feel that both are at fault," Mr. Koizumi said yesterday after another squabble broke out between Ms. Tanaka and her bureaucrats. She "should not lose control of her temper but remain calm."

There appears to be a concerted effort among foreign ministry officials to bypass Ms Tanaka by withholding information from her. She was, for example, left out of the loop when the U.S. first launched its strike against Afghanistan.

The question of whether Koizumi should replace her or not surfaced:

It might not have mattered so much that Ms. Tanaka appears increasingly incapable of conducting foreign policy if she were making inroads in her battle against corruption at the foreign ministry.

It is hardly surprising then that Ms. Tanaka is haunted by persistent speculation that she will soon be replaced.

That will be a difficult decision for Mr. Koizumi whose own initial popularity owed a lot to Ms. Tanaka's former popularity among Japanese housewives in particular.

In its Nov. 4, 2001 issue, the *FT* ran a story titled "Tanaka's future in doubt after rebuff," in which it explained that the Diet's decision not to send her to an important international meeting might presage her sacking:

The future of Makiko Tanaka, Japan's foreign minister, looked increasingly uncertain yesterday after lawmakers from ruling and opposition parties forced her to cancel a trip to a Group of Eight meeting in New York.

The decision to prevent Ms. Tanaka going to New York adds weight to comments from inside the ministry and elsewhere in government that she has been "sidelined" from the decision-making process.

It will also fuel speculation that Junichiro Koizumi, the prime minister, is considering dismissing her—a decision that would represent the first significant crack in his cabinet since he took power six months ago.

The controversy surrounding Ms. Tanaka stems from a combination of her naturally combative style and a series of diplomatic gaffes made immediately after she was appointed, when she failed to meet senior overseas diplomatic representatives.

The paper also mentioned the hard times she was experiencing at the Gaimusho in her bid to reform it:

Her attempts to reform the foreign ministry have alienated powerful career bureaucrats who have been seeking to undermine her in a bid to hasten her removal.

2.3 *FT*, January 2002

Then came Ms. Tanaka's dismissal in late January 2002. The *FT*, in its Jan. 30, 2002 issue wrote:

Junichiro Koizumi, Japan's prime minister, yesterday sacked Makiko Tanaka, foreign minister, as well as her deputy, after a dispute between them threatened to derail parliamentary debate over the budget.

The *FT* offered an assessment of her rule at the Foreign Ministry.

Ms. Tanaka initially earned high approval ratings for her blunt approach to the scandal-ridden Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was seen as contributing to Mr. Koizumi's 70% approval ratings. However, because of Ms. Tanaka's tense relations with ministry bureaucrats and politicians from rival factions, Mr. Koizumi has in recent months excluded her from domestic policy decisions and banned her from traveling abroad to attend some international meetings.

The paper's forecast of whether Mr. Koizumi's decision would affect his political standing or not proved correct.

The reshuffle is the first in Mr. Koizumi's administration, which swept to power last April on an economic reform platform. However, analysts said Mr. Koizumi's position was unlikely to be threatened immediately.

On the following day, the *FT* carried an article making an in-depth analysis on Japan's foreign policy, which was titled "Tokyo may struggle to restore foreign policy credibility." :

Deal-making between politicians and ministries means domestic issues color overseas strategy.

Junichiro Koizumi's reshuffle of his foreign policy team could not have come at a worse time for Japan.

Only a week ago, Mr. Koizumi was playing host to Afghanistan's interim administration as co-chair of a fundraising conference for the war-torn country. The conference, which raised \$4.5bn, was intended to pave the way for a significant Japanese leadership role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and future peacetime projects.

Instead of taking the lead in Afghanistan, however, Japan's foreign policy community was last night trying to figure out who would take the lead at home. Mr. Koizumi's dismissal of Makiko Tanaka, foreign minister, and Yoshiji Nogami, deputy foreign minister, over a row about the participation of non-government organizations in the fundraising conference throws a cloud of doubt over the country's fledgling foreign policy initiative.

The *FT* expressed concern about politicians' undue involvement in Japan's diplomacy and then goes on to criticize the lack of overall foreign policy strategies in Japan.

While every country has certain politicians who take an interest in foreign policy, government officials and analysts agree that Japan has allowed them to amass too much influence over policy decisions.

The result is that Japan's foreign policy has acquired a distinctly domestic flavor. "It's much more pork-barrel politics than strategy-oriented foreign policy," said Park Cheol Hee, associate professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo. "What I don't see is a real big blueprint for national strategies."

The *FT* continued to cover Ms. Tanaka even after she quit as foreign minister. In its March 26, 2002 issue, it said:

Two months after being sacked as Japan's first female foreign minister, Makiko Tanaka is now carving out a new political role for herself by publicly attacking Junichiro

Koizumi, the prime minister, and seeking to lift the veil on his reformist claims.

During a trip to China at the weekend, Ms. Tanaka claimed Mr. Koizumi was a reformer in name only, controlled by old-guard Liberal Democratic party politicians and “ spinning around in circles and getting nowhere. ”

Ms. Tanaka’s decision to bite the hand that fed her has been seen as a significant potential threat to Mr. Koizumi—giving voice to the growing doubts about his administration and offering dissenting voices a potent figurehead.

He (Takao Toshikawa, editor of *Insideline*, a respected political newsletter) points out that Ms. Tanaka failed to shine on the diplomatic circuit, alienating some key representatives of Japan’s allies by failing to attend meetings and buckling under pressure from Chinese and South Korean diplomats at important international meetings.

But despite the LDP’s insouciance, the fact remains that one of Japan’s most popular politicians is now determined to publicly humiliate Mr. Koizumi’s administration and is simultaneously making moves toward forming her own political base.

The article’s analysis of Ms. Tanaka’s remarks and moves appears to be as detailed as that of many of Japan’s monthly magazines. The *FT* is expected to maintain a careful watch on Ms. Tanaka.

2 .4 *The Economist*, May 2001

Now we shall turn to *The Economist* magazine of Britain. As a weekly magazine, it offered wide coverage of Ms. Tanaka’s vicissitude as Japan’s foreign minister.

In its May 19, 2001 issue, in which the magazine ran a story on Mr. Koizumi’s nationalistic tendencies as its Asian section top story, there was a side column on Ms. Tanaka. It said:

An unruly horse, was her father’s verdict. Mandarin at Japan’s foreign ministry would surely agree. Three weeks into her job as foreign minister, Makiko Tanaka’s kick is breaking bones. She intervenes in the delicate ministerial politics that govern personnel appointments. She speaks critically of her aides before journalists. She even vows a proper purge at the ministry after a scandal over misused diplomatic funds. Ms Tanaka is quick, witty and popular with the public. But unlike her father, Kakuei Tanaka, a former prime minister, she is clearly no diplomat.

Nor, say her critics, is she up to the job...

2 .5 *The Economist*, November 2001

The magazine depicted Ms. Tanaka's battle at the Gaimusho at length and even cast a doubt on her ability to lead it.

In its Nov. 10, 2001 issue, the magazine referred to the speculation circulating around that time about whether Ms. Tanaka would be let go in an article titled "Will the lady go?"

Foreigners may not have noticed the difference, but Japanese diplomacy has "ceased to function", according to the Yomiuri newspaper, Japan's most popular daily. For this grave state of affairs, blame Makiko Tanaka, Japan's foreign minister. Ms. Tanaka's supposed crimes mount daily. She lost a ring, and accused a staff member of stealing it. She threw tantrums about the invitation list for the emperor's autumn garden party. Heaven forbid, she seems even to have her own opinions about foreign policy. Naturally, the voices of reason are unanimous. Ms. Tanaka must go.

After starting on a critical tone, the magazine pointed out some extenuating circumstances:

True, her grasp of foreign affairs can sometimes seem shaky, but that is hardly a novelty for a Japanese foreign minister. Her behavior is a little erratic from time to time: she has taken to locking ministry officials in, and out of, their offices, for instance, and screaming at them. But great figures often have eccentric streaks. The mudslinging in the press says more about the petty vindictiveness of foreign-ministry bureaucrats than about Ms. Tanaka's particular shortcomings. What has hurt most, however, is the enmity of Yasuo Fukuda, the chief cabinet secretary. Mr. Fukuda's star is rising, and he wants Ms. Tanaka's job.

It is true Mr. Fukuda's stock has been rising, but it is not quite certain whether Mr. Fukuda wants to become foreign minister. The magazine then went on to say:

Caught between two indispensable warring colleagues, Mr. Koizumi seems to have decided, in sadly characteristic fashion, to do nothing. The bureaucrats are at fault, he says, but so is Ms. Tanaka. A cabinet reshuffle is out of the question.

2 .6 *The Economist*, February 2002

The magazine had become more critical of Ms. Tanaka by the time she was sacked. But it questioned the advisability of Mr. Koizumi's action, suggesting it might weaken his hands. In its Feb. 2, 2002 issue, the magazine wrote that:

Junichiro Koizumi may come to regret sacking his foreign minister.

When he formed his cabinet last April, Junichiro Koizumi named one minister who, above all, seemed to prove that he meant business. Makiko Tanaka, the outspoken daughter of a 1970s prime minister, took over the foreign ministry and promptly declared war on its aloof and unaccountable bureaucrats. Although other ministries have done more to keep Japan's economy bedridden, most voters thought hers was a good enough place to start, and showered her with approval ratings that only Mr. Koizumi could match.

Unfortunately, Ms. Tanaka made a poor foreign minister. She showed little flair for diplomacy, offered no good foreign-policy ideas, and undermined her assault on the bureaucracy with petty personal feuds. So after her tangle with a powerful MP slowed the passage of an economic-stimulus bill, Mr. Koizumi conceded yet another round to the bureaucrats. He sacked Ms. Tanaka on Jan. 29, saying her tribulations had begun "to affect the entire government and parliamentary debate."

The sacking of Ms. Tanaka must be judged by whether it strengthens Mr. Koizumi's ability to sort out the economy. By removing a large distraction, it may do that. But if Ms. Tanaka's failings hold any lessons for Mr. Koizumi, it is that popularity ratings ultimately mean nothing if they are not backed by results.

Both the *FT* and the *Economist* followed Ms. Tanaka's tenure as foreign minister quite closely and did some interesting but concise in-depth analysis. It can be said that the *FT* articles were more detached, while *The Economist* became more and more critical of her as time went by.

3 . *Wall Street Journal and Business Week*

It can be said that the American press has devoted less space to Ms. Tanaka while she was at the helm of the Gaimusho compared with the British press represented by the *FT* and *The Economist* whose articles were analyzed above. This was partly because of her somewhat unfriendly remarks and behavior displayed toward the United States. She chose China as the destination of her first overseas trip after becoming the foreign minister. She did not bother to meet Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage during the latter's Japan visit. She also emphasized the need to maintain friendly ties with both the United States and China. Besides, it should be also noted that her father, Kakuei Tanaka, was prosecuted and was handed down a suspended sentence in the notorious Lockheed scandal which was triggered by U.S. congressional investigations.

Even among the U.S. media, there is some difference in the frequency and depth of reporting on Ms. Tanaka. We found out that the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*) had wider

coverage of Ms. Tanaka than the *New York Times* whose articles we shall discuss below, Likewise, *Business Week* had more extensive coverage of Ms. Tanaka than *Time* or *Newsweek*. Such a difference apparently reflects divergent views among editors of these newspapers and magazines.

First we shall take a look at *WSJ* articles which mentions Ms. Tanaka.

3 .1 *WSJ*, April 2001

On April 27, 2001, when the Koizumi cabinet was inaugurated, the *WSJ* ran a one-column article.

Ms. Tanaka is popular among the Japanese public and is known for her outspoken remarks, such as her reported suggestion that former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto “ be taken out in space by satellite and left in orbit. ” But she made too many enemies in the ruling Liberal-Democratic party to be awarded a cabinet post under a consensus-driven system...

This was a concise description of Ms. Tanaka but made no mention of problems awaiting her at the Gaimusho nor her credentials as a foreign minister.

The *WSJ* carried no article in early November when pressures mounted for her exit.

3 .2 *WSJ*, Jan. 2001

On Jan. 30, 2001, when Tanaka quit, the *WSJ* had a three-column article, but it was a combination of Tanaka’s dismissal and a rise in Japan’s jobless rate. The part in which Tanaka was mentioned follows:

Japan faced a slew of unsettling news yesterday, as Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi fired his foreign minister and new data pointed to a further souring in the economy.

The prime minister last night fired Makiko Tanaka, his popular but unpredictable foreign minister, after her dispute with ministry officials held up passage of a supplementary budget to stimulate the economy. The decision, applauded by leaders of the wing of the ruling party opposed to change, underlined the obstacles Mr. Koizumi faces in his drive for change from bureaucrats and ruling-party power brokers.

These paragraphs were succinct but did not contain many news elements that would allow readers to judge whether she was right or wrong.

3 .3 *BW*, May 2001

Now we shall turn to *BW*. As in the case of the *WSJ*, *BW* reported on Tanaka on two occasions. The first was in the May 7, 2001 issue, or about a week after the Koizumi cabinet was inaugurated. It ran a six-page story in which Ms. Tanaka was introduced in the last page with a picture and a brief 9-line CV. It read as follows:

Makiko Tanaka

Daughter of late LDP strongman Kakuei Tanaka. Not a seasoned policymaker. But she has a big public following, and she has backed Koizumi as Japan's best chance for reform.

This can be characterized as a fair assessment of what kind of a politician Tanaka is. But again this is too short to enable readers to form a proper image of her.

3 .4 *BW*, February 2002

In the Feb. 18, 2002 issue, *BW* ran a column titled “ Can Koizumi pull back from the brink? ” but was mostly devoted to the fix in which Koizumi found himself.

Has Junichiro Koizumi committed political hara-kiri? That's the verdict of many analysts in Tokyo. After nine months of sky-high polls, the tousle-haired Japanese Prime Minister has watched his popularity ratings plunge from 80% to some 50% in a matter of days. Koizumi triggered the slide when he fired his popular Foreign Minister, Makiko Tanaka.

It wasn't just the firing that ticked off Koizumi's supporters. Yes, many Japanese love the gutsy, outspoken Tanaka, one of the few politicians willing to openly fight corruption in the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party and foreign ministry. But they could have lived well with her departure had Koizumi dismissed her for a valid reason—such as her consistently undiplomatic behavior toward Japan's foreign allies. Instead Koizumi simply caved in to pressure from LDP elders. They were furious at Tanaka for daring to challenge Muneo Suzuki, an LDP pol who until now has wielded decisive influence over how Japan distributes some \$11 billion in annual foreign aid...

BW's mention of a sharp fall in Koizumi's popularity and Tanaka's reputation as an avid “ corruption fighter ” deserves attention. But this mention was within the context of Koizumi's fortunes and Tanaka was only one of the factors affecting them.

4 . *New York Times*, *Time* and *Newsweek*

4 .1 *New York Times*, January 2002

The *New York Times* (*NYT*) seems to have been uninterested in Ms. Tanaka and only ran one story devoted to her during her tenure at the Foreign Ministry, and it came at the time of her resignation which took the form of Prime Minister Koizumi sacking her. *Time* magazine wrote only twice about her, and then only briefly, and *Newsweek* virtually ignored her. But the *NYT*'s solo Tanaka story had a few interesting remarks.

The article dated Jan. 30, 2002, explained the reason behind her departure:

As the first woman to be Japan's foreign minister, Ms. Tanaka, 57, had won legions of followers by criticizing Japan's conservative old guard. But her constant feuding with bureaucrats made her a liability for Mr. Koizumi, who started the new year facing a worsening economic situation and a number of diplomatic challenges.

A year ago, Ms. Tanaka was Japan's most popular politician, based on public opinion polls. But by the time a conference was held here last week on Afghan aid, she had been reduced to a figurehead.

And the *NYT*, having printed few reports on Ms. Tanaka during her tenure, sums up what went wrong, albeit belatedly:

After the roller coaster of Ms. Tanaka's tenure—in which she was involved in controversies over government leaks, fired secretaries and a missed imperial garden party—many Japanese say a professional is needed to run foreign office.

During her time in office, Ms. Tanaka had complained that bureaucrats had cut her out of the flow of information, had not told her about meetings and had isolated her in an office that contained no international newspaper, foreign language dictionaries or even a map of the world.

These two paragraphs appear to have explained Ms. Tanaka's position evenhandedly. They pointed out that she was perceived as a victim of actions by some bureaucrats and that her office was not equipped with international newspapers or foreign language dictionaries, suggesting that she appeared to be uninterested in what was going on in the world as a foreign minister.

The article had an interesting feminist twist:

Also fired on Tuesday night was Vice Foreign Minister Yoshiji Nogami, the ministry's top civil servant.

The two had contradicted each other in the national Parliament, the Diet, in recent days over the participation of two nongovernmental Japanese organizations in the conference on Afghan aid. The clash, with accusations of lying, pushed Ms. Tanaka to the point of tears in a television interview on Friday.

The incident further escalated when Prime Minister Koizumi responded: "Tears are women's greatest weapons. When women cry, men cannot compete with them."

In response, 18 female opposition members of the Diet went to the premier's official residence on Tuesday to show solidarity with Ms. Tanaka, a member of Parliament since 1993. They said in a statement. "The prime minister has biased views on women's expressions, anger and grief."

It seemed that the *NYT* was not so much interested in the feuding between Ms. Tanaka and Gaimusho bureaucrats, but it showed great interest in Tanaka's tears, which it may have thought would attract interest on the part of U.S. readers as an example of difference in cultural backgrounds of the two countries.

4.2 *Time*, October 2001

Time carried a five-page feature story on Koizumi entitled "Japan's Destroyer" in its Sept. 17, 2001, issue in which it explained extensively Koizumi's reformist policies, but Tanaka's name was conspicuously absent. In the Oct. 25, 2001, issue, the *Time* carried a follow-up story titled "Stop That Man" in which it made a brief mention of Ms. Tanaka.

Over at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, civil servants have conducted a smear campaign against the acerbic but popular Foreign Minister, Makiko Tanaka, ever since she started cracking down on corruption.

This is too short a sentence with which to judge Tanaka's performance at the Gaimusho.

4.3 *Newsweek*, May 2001

Newsweek magazine virtually ignored Ms. Tanaka. Though it ran a story on Koizumi titled "Looks Are Everything" in its May 7, 2001 issue, Ms. Tanaka was mentioned only briefly twice.

...One former rival, incoming Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka, joked that Koizumi's trademark silver hairdos made him "look like the Lion King." ...

He chose the outspoken Tanaka to be Japan's first female foreign minister...

Again these mentions are too short, relegating Ms. Tanaka to a position of inconsequence in the eyes of readers.

So what were the reasons for the virtual neglect of Ms. Tanaka as foreign minister by the *Time* and the *Newsweek*. It can be surmised that these two magazines apparently judged that a Japanese foreign minister is not an important person that may attract lots of attention from U.S. readers. Besides the space of these two weekly magazines is limited and there are many other interesting news stories elsewhere in the world. It is a stark contrast to the airing of what Ms. Tanaka did or spoke in popular morning and afternoon shows of Japanese television stations.

5 . *Japan Times*

5 .1 *Japan Times*, April 2001

As it is the most time-honored English-language Japanese newspaper, the *Japan Times* (*JT*) extensively covered Ms. Tanaka's tenure as foreign minister.

The *JT* carried an article analyzing the significance of Ms. Tanaka's appointment. It correctly pointed out that:

While Junichiro Koizumi's appointment of Makiko Tanaka as foreign minister took the nation by surprise, some experts warn she could be a mixed blessing for the new prime minister despite her strong popular appeal.

Although Tanaka has a good command of English and accompanied her father on his official overseas trips nearly three decades ago, her diplomatic skills remain untested.

The paper also quoted Rei Shirakawa, a political science professor at the University of Tokyo, as saying that:

" I doubt if (she) has the sense of balance that is a must to take on the foreign minister's job. "

But the *JT* also quoted another commentator, political analyst Minoru Morita as explaining the situation within the LDP, making this analytical article a balanced one:

Morita predicted that the LDP elders, despite obvious complaints of Koizumi's ways, will have no choice but to count on the new leader's popularity and Tanaka's appeal to garner voter support for the party in the crucial Upper House election in July.

5.2 JT, November 2001

During the period from late October to early November in 2001 when voices calling for Tanaka's resignation mounted, the JT ran several articles on Ms. Tanaka. In its Nov. 7 issue, the paper carried a story on the problem of Ms. Tanaka's attendance at a G-8 meeting in New York.

Embattled Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka said Tuesday that she has still not given up on attending U.N. General Assembly and Group of Eight foreign ministers' meeting in New York, despite her request again being turned down by the Diet.

Tanaka's repeated request came after leaders of the ruling and opposition parties decided not to approve her trip last week, apparently in retaliation over ministry personal disputes and as punishment for being late for an important diplomatic meeting.

Meanwhile, the LDP headquarters received numerous calls from the public Tuesday, criticizing the party for not allowing Tanaka to attend the international meetings.

And on the following day, the JT reported that former Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa would attend the UN meeting in place of Ms. Tanaka and also reported Prime Minister Koizumi's reprimanding of Ms. Tanaka.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters Wednesday that he has cautioned Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka to think before she speaks.

The JT ran a story in its Nov. 9, 2001 issue on mounting calls for a cabinet shakeup:

Speculation that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will reshuffle his cabinet sometime after the current Diet session ends Dec. 7 has not ebbed, despite his repeated denials.

Pressures on Koizumi to change his cabinet lineup have mounted, particularly from LDP lawmakers who claim Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka, who is embroiled in a continuing standoff with ministry bureaucrats, should be replaced because she is not doing her job properly on the diplomatic front.

5.3 *JT*, January 2002

But Koizumi did not reshuffle his cabinet until late in January 2002. In its Jan. 30, 2002, issue, the *JT* ran a front-page story headlined “ Tanaka, Nogami sacked by Koizumi. ” :

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi late Tuesday night sacked Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka and Vice Foreign Minister Yoshiji Nogami over an escalating fingerpointing debacle over who was responsible for two NGOs being barred from a recent international conference on rebuilding Afghanistan.

The paper then tried to grasp the meaning of her sacking:.

Tanaka, also popular with the general public, was one of the highlights of the prime minister’s cabinet appointments. Political pundits said that while her sacking may help smooth Diet proceedings, it may also distance the administration from the public.

Makoto Sataka, a political commentator, said he thinks Koizumi seized the opportunity to kick the highly popular foreign minister out of his cabinet.

Commentator Sataka’s description of the situation by using the expression “ seized the opportunity ” may have been appropriate.

On the following day, the *JT* ran a story titled “ Tanaka is formally relieved of her Foreign Ministry post. ”

The government of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Wednesday formally relieved Makiko Tanaka of her Foreign Ministry portfolio and accelerated efforts to find a successor.

“ In a word, we want to select a ‘ good ’ foreign minister ’, ” the top government spokesman said, suggesting he had difficult relationship with Tanaka.

Earlier in the day, Koizumi told the Upper House Budget Committee that Tanaka bears the primary responsibility for the brouhaha, explaining that if the ministry had been able to settle the dispute by itself, such problems would not have taken place.

In the same issue, the paper carried two side stories in its national section. One of them titled “ Koizumi may pay for dismissing Tanaka ” said:

Although the ouster of Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka may save Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s skin for the time being by resolving the Diet stalemate, it may lead to the long-term decline of his administration.

This prediction was proving true, as Koizumi's support rating plunged from around 80% to around 50% in a matter of a few days after Tanaka's resignation and the support rating then fell below the non-support rating in March.

The paper then quoted Kaoru Okano, a former president of Meiji University, as warning that

The dismissal of Tanaka will weaken the Koizumi administration and may possibly corner him to the point where he will have no choice but to dissolve the Lower House for a snap election.

Another side story had a subtitle " Her critics say the popular Tanaka was never cut to hold the key cabinet position " said:

Makiko Tanaka's dismissal as foreign minister brought an end to nine months of feuding with career bureaucrats, which not only highlighted the mandarins' stubbornness in looking after their own interests but also damaged Japan's diplomatic credibility.

The article thus cast doubt on Ms. Tanaka's ability to conduct foreign policy and highlighted the damage done to Japan's diplomacy.

The same issue also carried an editorial on Ms. Tanaka's resignation. It began with the following words:

In an unprecedented development Wednesday, Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka and Vice Foreign Minister Yoshiji Nogami were simultaneously dismissed for their failure to maintain an effective foreign policy team.

The editorial also castigated Mr. Koizumi:

But he (Mr. Koizumi) still deserves blame for his failure to take a decisive step sooner.

For months, he has remained a virtual observer. Of course, he has been bound by many concerns. For example, he must have feared that dismissing Ms. Tanaka would encourage the anti-Koizumi intraparty faction to step up moves against him and that his public popularity would have suffered a sharp decline.

The editorial points out the damage done by the fiasco in concrete terms:

This unworthy dispute has damaged the Japanese public's confidence in the government and has also badly hurt Japan's international popularity.

The dispute raised several important questions. Why have Foreign Ministry bureaucrats failed to keep up their traditional integrity (or is it that they do no longer possess such a quality)? Why do they yield to pressure (or verbal intervention) from politicians like Mr. Suzuki, who have no official position in the ministry. Moreover, many Japanese people felt that with their deliberate use of ambiguous expressions in their Diet testimony, the bureaucrats looked as though they were trying to pass responsibility on to the foreign minister—the purpose, of course, was to shield Mr. Suzuki from any criticism.

The editorial explained in detail the tangled enmity between Ms. Tanaka and Mr. Suzuki, which was one of the main factors that led to her fall, and cast doubt on the integrity of Foreign Ministry bureaucrats. It can be said that this editorial went deeper than any other known English-language newspaper articles in explaining the circumstances leading up to Ms. Tanaka's resignation.

6 . Conclusion

Summing up, there was indeed a wide difference in the scope of coverage and depth of analysis in reporting on the rise and fall of Ms. Tanaka as foreign minister. Apparently, there was a difference in what editors thought was important between Japanese and overseas media, and the public's perception of Ms. Tanaka may have differed between Japan and the United States. The coverage was most extensive by the *JT*, as expected, followed by the *FT* and *The Economist*, both of Britain. U.S. journalism as far as the newspapers and magazines taken up in this thesis were concerned, was not keenly interested in Ms. Tanaka's nine-month saga. The situation as regards the analytical aspect of reporting in the newspapers and magazines covered by the thesis was about the same as in the case of the coverage of reporting.

The *JT*'s coverage was extensive and deep aided by the fact that it stations its journalist at the Gaimusho's " Kasumi Club " for reporters.

It was surprising that British journalism, represented by the *FT* and *The Economist* in this thesis, provided detailed reporting. We can observe that British journalism, the *FT* and *The Economist* in particular, seems to have a greater interest in overseas events in a balanced manner compared with American journalism.

The U.S. newspapers and magazines that were taken up in this thesis were not enthusiastic

about the Tanaka saga and their articles were more or less perfunctory. *Time* and *Newsweek* virtually ignored Ms. Tanaka until her resignation. This was apparently because of Ms. Tanaka's repeated anti-U.S. and pro-China remarks while she was foreign minister and their lack of interest in the brouhaha at the ministry which they were presumed to have thought would lead nowhere.

We may be able to say that British journalism at times runs more detailed stories on overseas events than its U.S. counterpart.

It should also be pointed out that the flow of information between Japan and the United States may be grossly one-sided, given the scarcity of reporting on Ms. Tanaka during her nine-month tenure as foreign minister and heavy reporting on U.S. affairs by the Japanese press at all times.

The *JT*'s reporting was detailed and it was especially strong at the time of Ms. Tanaka's resignation. Only the *JT* pointed out that Ms. Tanaka was never cut out to hold the key cabinet position and that Mr. Koizumi apparently seized the opportunity to sack her. But it is regrettable that the *JT* fell short of pointing out that Ms. Tanaka had become a liability for the Gaimusho because of a series of slip of tongue, lies and diplomatic blunder and that she never took the initiative in reforming the scandal-ridden Gaimusho.

We conclude this thesis by pointing to the need to address the problem of the insufficiency of reporting on Japanese affairs by the foreign press.

(reference materials besides the news articles taken up in this thesis)

『*World Affairs Weekly*』(Tokyo, Jiji Press) Feb. 26, April 16, 2002, editions

『*Jiji Newsword 2002*』(Tokyo, Jiji Press)