

# International Olympic Committee Much to Be Blamed

by UCHIDA Tadao

It is often said that sports and politics should be separated. Although I understand the feelings, I cannot agree with such opinion. The Beijing Olympic torch relay started immediately after the Chinese government suppressed with weapons the demonstration by Tibetans seeking their freedom and self-government. Therefore it brought about the mess in various locations all over the world, which drove some Western media to go so far as to comment that China was exporting disturbances as well as pirates and cheap products to the world. After torch replay was obstructed in London and Paris, the Chinese government gave instructions to mobilize Chinese people as well as people of Chinese origin living in those cities where torch replay took place, including Nagano in Japan. As a result, we observed the unprecedented scene of Olympic torch relay. Runners with Olympic torch were surrounded by five-star red flags of all sizes and barriers of security guards.

The Olympic Games have been criticized for a long time as places to boost national prestige. For example, Dictator Adolf Hitler hosted the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936. The so-called state-amateur problem, which enabled the Eastern states to gain much more gold medals than the Western states, also arose in the Cold War era. In the Munich Olympic Games of 1972, the terrorism claimed many lives of Israeli athletes. In 1980, many Western states decided to boycott the Moscow Olympic Games to protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the previous year. In retaliation, when the Olympic Games came to Los Angeles in 1984, the Soviet Union organized its own boycott. In 1964, the Tokyo Olympics also encountered the astonishing repatriation of the North Korean team just before the opening. There are many examples of Olympic Games being buffeted by the international politics.

A French pedagogue, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founded the modern Olympics in the late nineteenth century and then Avery Brundage, inspired by de Coubertin's will, resuscitated the Olympics in the middle of the twentieth century. However, the ideal and the spirit of the Olympics have been forced to be changed now. We should not enshrine the Olympics by pushing the reality away any more. In this sense, the International Olympic Committee should be much blamed for just looking on the torch relay without doing anything. Is there any significance, other

than to save the face of China, of carrying the Olympic torch along all the way surrounded by the Chinese special operatives called the 'Men in Blue' and barricaded by the local police, thereby blocking ordinary people?

**(This is the English translation of an article written by UCHIDA Tadao, Professor of Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, which originally appeared on the BBS "Hyakka-Seiho" of JFIR on April 30, 2008)**