

the Meiji Restoration and the After-the-War Democratization, which transformed Japan from top to bottom. This time, the Prime Minister Hashimoto, who was granted a second two-year term as Prime Minister of Japan in September 1997, took the initiative and promised the Japanese people that he will accomplish six reforms; administrative, fiscal, financial, economic, welfare, and educational. All these reforms, as mentioned above, are necessary if this nation is to survive in the Age of globalization. But there is neither a model to emulate, nor a powerful agency. Some reforms, such as administrative meet the stiffest resistance from bureaucrats and politicians, whose vested interests are deeply built into the status quo system.

Around the end of 1997, the news of 'Korean economic crisis' became headlines in Japanese newspapers, following the series of economic crises in Southeast Asian countries. As in the case of Japan's economy, these newly developing economies simply brew up, absorbing foreign capitals and technologies to produce goods for exporting. The myth of 'little dragons' was quickly demolished, and so is the myth of Japan's economic miracle.

The prediction made in *The Economist* was rather severe: "The Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, will fail in most of the six areas of reform he has embraced. The bureaucracy will not be quashed. If he is lucky, he will get welfare reform on to the statute book" (p. 83).

*TIME*, in its special double issue (April 28–May 5, 1997), also describes contemporary Japan as the Age of Anxiety: "once confident that prosperity and lifetime jobs were unassailable, a changing society now faces a future not so simple or secure" (p. 53).

One of the hopes is that we can see a new generation of young leaders – 'forceful young mold-breakers eager to be freed from government interference and ready to compete with any one.' But it is not guaranteed that anyone can be a Nomo Hideo, one of the most popular players on the Los Angeles Dodgers, who has determined to free himself from the constraint of Japanese society and came to America to realize his dream. Japan's future hinges on whether it creates such people like Nomo – internationally-minded, self-made individuals in different social spheres.