(Summary)

Development Expert and Political Entrepreneur
—Development as an Arena of Social Interaction—

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The approach of human security, which has currently been arousing a great interest in development circles in Japan, appears to share the same problem with its predecessors. It lacks the consideration of a crucial factor that development projects are not merely built on the basis of discourse and planning of overseas development experts but significantly influenced by political relationships and cultural logics of local people. This inattention is attributable to the way the development discourse has been formed; international organizations and experts have turned local experiences and knowledge into universal model of and for the realities of development, and the structure of its discourse that encourages experts to systematize the objects of development in time and space, including local personnel. According to Ferguson, such discourse may depoliticize local actors and produce an effect of the centralization of power in the hands of local bureaucrats and dominant parties. His ethnographic study illuminates this point in the failure of a rural development project in Lesotho as a consequence of the experts’ ignorance of political action inserted into the project.

In this regard, political studies of African states can contribute to development practices. Despite myriads of locally specific political situations, the studies suggest the underlying similarities of political action among African politicians and bureaucrats; they tend to act as entrepreneurs who appropriate state resources and institutions for their benefit and distribute them along the network of dyadic personal relationships. While this practice may enable political entrepreneurs to amass considerable wealth, it produces a high level of uncertainty and risk. In a constantly changing situation, political entrepreneurs typically resort to an action that has both aspects of risk taking and risk avoidance. They escape as well as gamble instantly and individually in the game of chance. Such a tactical action, what Bayart calls extraversion, differs from the strategy of human security that aims to terminate risks.

Thus, it is interactions between development experts and political entrepreneurs that are likely to take place in the arenas of development in Africa. This means that they influence development projects through the contradictory tendencies of action; experts systematize them for universal cause, while entrepreneurs ‘situation- ize’ them for individual profit. So far, their negotiations seem inconclusive and may perpetuate the process of development without completion.