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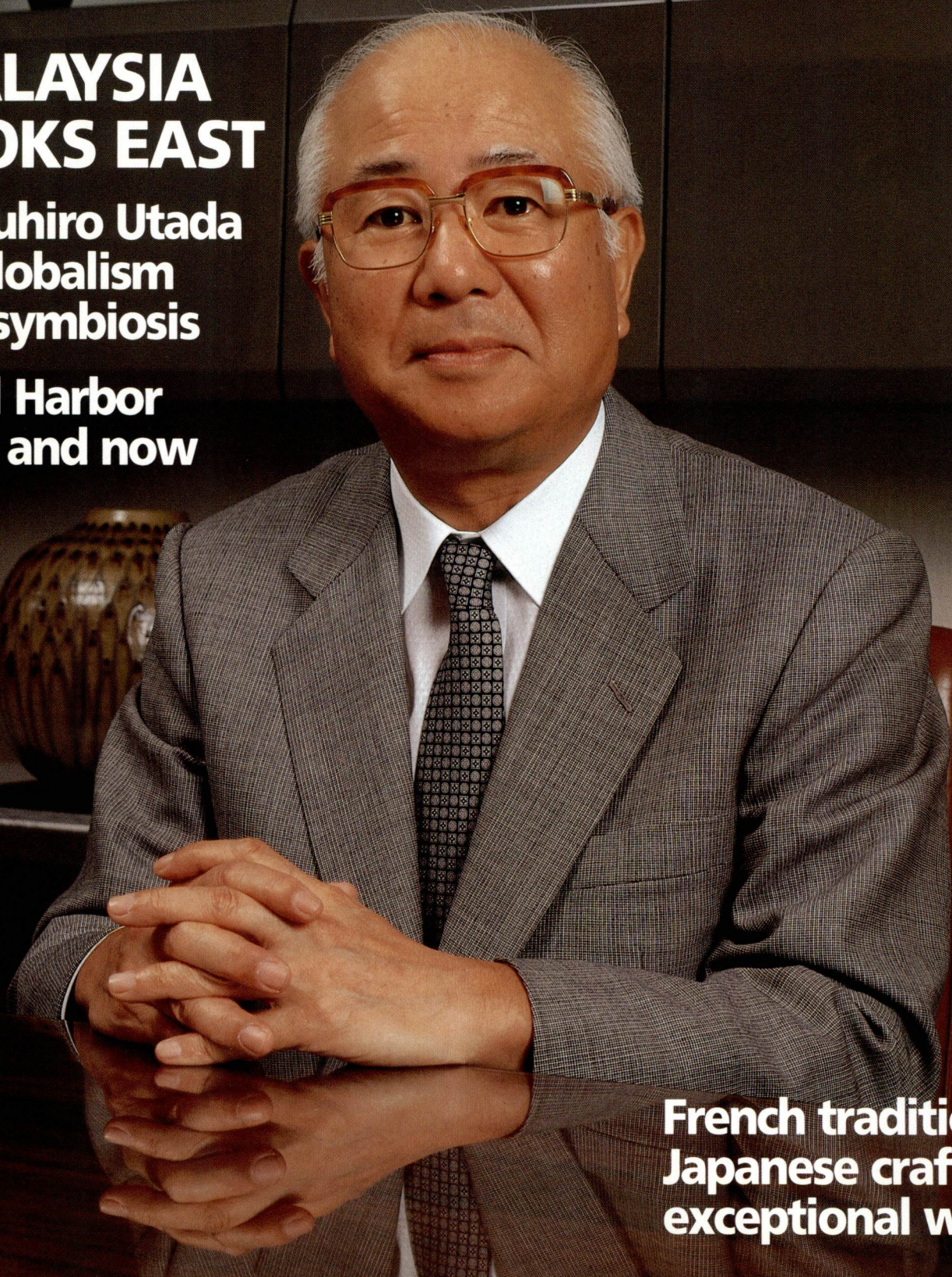
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JAPAN UPDATE

MALAYSIA LOOKS EAST

**Katsuhiro Utada
on globalism
and symbiosis**

**Pearl Harbor
then and now**



**French tradition
Japanese craft
exceptional wine**

JAPAN UPDATE

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KATSUHIRO UTADA, vice chairman of Keizai Koho Center, honorary chairman of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. and vice chairman of KEIDANREN
Photo by Masashi Sakajiri

BACK COVER:

Bonenkai parties offer employees and managers a chance to relax at year-end.
KYODO PHOTO



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JOINT AID FOR THE BALTICS

I read with interest Katsura Kuno's article (Nov. 1991) on the Baltic countries and Estonia in particular.

His report conveys the interest that the Japanese now take in the far-flung former colonies of the Soviet empire, and the newly independent countries' need for economic assistance. No doubt a substantial and a well thought-out aid program will give Japan a strategic advantage point for the far greater and more complicated task of aiding the rest of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation.

Scandinavian countries have a good knowledge of and take great interest in the Baltic nations for historical and other reasons, and there may also be some interesting possibilities for joint Japanese-Scandinavian approaches on how best to aid these struggling countries.

POUL E. SVEJSTRUP
Tokyo correspondent
Jyllandsposten, Aarhus, Denmark

PUBLISHERS AREN'T VILLAINS

I was surprised that Chieko Mulhern, in her article "The Perception Gap" (Nov. 1991), says that she believes commercial publishers bear a certain responsibility for Japan's unflattering image abroad. Frankly, I wonder what bookstores she's looked into lately.

Though the numerous books that were lauding Japan's economic system as a model for the world have largely given way to critiques such as Karel van Wolferen's Enigma of Japanese Power, many other recent publications deal sympathetically with current Japanese attitudes and mores, including those by authors such as Donald Ritchie, Alan Booth, Lesley Downer and Nick Bornoff.

As for her charge that publishers are limiting themselves

to some elitist Japanese literary canon, we at Kodansha International are publishing the work of some of Japan's most popular, and unconventional, younger writers, notably in the ground-breaking new collection Monkey Brain Sushi. Kodansha International's publication list features such provocative figures as the internationally acclaimed Haruki Murakami, feminist writer Yuko Tsushima, adventurous contemporary philosopher Taiichi Sakaiya and the strikingly original Masahiko Shimada. Murakami, in particular, brings a fresh, new voice to Japanese literature in translation, one that has changed perceptions of contemporary Japanese culture around the world.

No doubt a gap exists between the Western perception of Japanese cultural and social realities, but that has as much to do with fundamental attitudes, prejudices and assumptions on both sides as with the availability of relevant information. Those curious for insights into the workings of today's Japan have only to seek, in the appropriate bookstore, and they will find.

LESLIE M. POCKELL
Editorial Director
Kodansha International, Tokyo

MORE ON SHIPPING BUSINESS

I found the October issue to be quite informative and useful. Working for a foreign-owned company for many years, I have learned how to explain things Japanese, including political and social affairs, to non-Japanese as well as to understand how others view Japan and Japanese affairs. These are two important concerns for me.

READERS ARE INVITED to write to the editor of JAPAN UPDATE on subjects of public interest. Comment on topics covered by this magazine is also welcome. Letters must be signed and include full addresses (no post office boxes), though requests for anonymity will be honored. Visitors writing from hotels should provide home addresses. Letters should be no longer than 100 words, typed and double-spaced. The editor retains the right to abridge letters.

In this respect, your center has been playing an important role through your journals and now a monthly magazine. As someone who has been engaged in the shipping business, I am particularly interested in any subject relating to shipping or transportation.

HIROKAGE NISHIMATSU
K.K. MISC Agencies, Osaka

DIVERSITY AND ECO-TECH

The interview with Dr. Carlos Cortes (Oct. 1991) first drew my attention to your magazine. American universities have been grappling with the issues curriculum content, hiring practices and minority admissions. This effort has not come easily, therefore it is encouraging that the Japanese business community is becoming aware of the complexities of multiculturalism.

On a different tangent, it was refreshing to read Maari Konya's article in the next issue on Japanese efforts to develop technologies for environmental protection. Japan has come under international criticism for its short-sighted policies on natural resources, for instance, drift-net fishing and logging of tropical rain forests.

As someone who appreciates both the wilderness and Japanese high-tech products (laptop computer, 4-wheel drive vehicle, stereo equipment and video games), it seems that these technological strengths must be applied to remedy the destruction caused by industrial pollution.

The corporate research teams listed in your November issue are only a beginning, but they offer real hope.

GARY KAWAGUCHI
University of California, Berkeley

ON GLOBALISM AND SYMBIOSIS

A business leader advocates an alternative to ruthless competition

KATSUHIRO UTADA

Japan is at a turning point. Although many Japanese are keenly aware of this fact, a national consensus has yet to be formed as to how Japan should change in the years ahead. This situation, therefore, causes an uneasy feeling among the Japanese.

True, Japan has accomplished several dramatic changes in the past. The Meiji Restoration and the revival after World War II are examples of such changes in modern history.

But there is a decided difference between the present and the past. In those days, Japan was a relatively small player on the international scene. There were a number of leading powers on the world stage, and Japan could learn from those advanced nations in its effort to catch up.

Today, by contrast, Japan has emerged as an economic superpower, increasingly expected by many other countries to play a leadership role. And this time around, there is apparently no clear-cut target to guide future efforts. As expectations increase throughout the world, "Japan bashing" also is increasing in intensity.

Under these circumstances, present-day

Japan seems to be painstakingly searching for the right changes to make, and it clearly recognizes a need to change.

It is probably true that Japan is becoming a third pole in the global order, regardless of whether the Japanese are aware of it or not. So, Japan must actively promote international cooperation and assume a role as a world leader. Also, Japan must be

willing to share burdens with various countries around the world, since establishing and maintaining good international relations is indispensable for its existence.

Will Japan be able to do all this merely by following the practices of the United States and other leading nations in Europe? Unlikely.

It has been charged by some critics that the Japanese way of thinking and style of management, based on their traditional manners, customs and sense of value, tends to impede the development of international cooperation.

Whatever is wrong should be corrected. But what if it turns out that Japan has to sacrifice some of its traditional virtues in order to promote international cooperation? Is that truly beneficial to both Japan and other countries?

Frankly, I have mixed feelings about whether Japan must promote international cooperation, and whether it is worth compromising traditional virtues.

The uniqueness of the Japanese way of thinking, it seems, has much to do with the fact that Japan is a culturally and racially homogeneous nation. On this subject it has



been said that the country was composed of several distinct ethnic groups thousands of years ago. But since then, with their total assimilation, no one questions that today's Japan is a highly integrated nation.

Moreover, the country is geographically isolated in the easternmost part of Asia, separated from other countries by the sea, and all its inhabitants speak the same language. These conditions combine to foster the cultural uniformity among the Japanese, something rare among other nations. As a result of these geographic and cultural factors, the Japanese have come to possess a strikingly similar perspective. In Japanese society, even if the presence of law is minimal, individual members of society mutually regulate one another in accordance with a shared sense of ethics.

Thus, the Japanese have traditionally attached special importance to harmony—cordial human relations—one of the striking attributes of Japanese culture.

From the Japanese viewpoint, human beings can truly exist only as members of a society. By contrast, Europeans regard human beings fundamentally as individuals who confirm their own existence through a constant struggle against nature. Herein lies a marked difference in viewpoints between Japanese and Europeans.

TRADITIONAL SPIRIT

The European mode of thought finds its clearest expression in Darwin's theory of evolution. The basic principle underlying this theory is the survival of the fittest—the notion that weaker organisms that are defeated in the natural struggle will perish and only the strong will survive. Thus, the theory assumes that nature is something to conquer. This attitude has driven the modern European civilization to develop science for the sake of survival.

By contrast, the Japanese have not adopted the concept of the survival of the fittest. Instead, Japanese tradition is deeply rooted in a concept, best defined by the word "symbiosis." I interpret the term to

mean the coexistence of different entities, living together yet each displaying its own individuality and cultural characteristics.

Traditionally, the Japanese believe that human beings should live in perfect harmony with nature. Even flowering plants of different species should be allowed to grow together in the same place. Symbiosis implies the coexistence of the strong and the

Both the
supplier and the
consumer must start
thinking about the
social and public
aspects of our
transactions, reassess
our pursuit of purely
private interests and
acquiesce to some
sacrifices for the
benefit of society

weak, rather than the strong flourishing by preying on the weak. Symbiosis is also reflected in religious perspectives. In contrast to the monotheism of most Europeans, the Japanese are predominantly polytheists.

Japan has undergone remarkable industrialization and modernization over the past four decades. During that interval, Western ways of thinking have been widely disseminated among the Japanese. One result, however, is that more and more Japanese have become aware of the gap between their traditional spirit and the Western essence.

Modern industrial society can be viewed

as a social system based on efficiency and individualism. In such a society, business enterprises, political groupings and individuals tend to become egotistical. The weak who cannot assert themselves must unavoidably suffer. Even those who are strong often feel some measure of guilt over gaining their own way, especially if they are influenced by Japanese traditional values. In my mind, this is the source of a moral and ethical dilemma the Japanese face in an industrial society.

LESS PACKAGING

It is probably in the economic field that the Japanese spirit and Western essence are diametrically at odds. By virtue of its history, Japanese management differs from Western management. At many of Japan's big businesses, management and capital are separate entities. Even more so in recent years, the relative importance of capital has been continually decreasing.

Though most top executives are salaried, they have a free hand in the practice of management because of the weak influence of capital. They are able to adopt practices putting forward those concerns generally considered the most important priorities for management—respecting the humanity of others, promoting the welfare of employees and establishing good relations with clients. The Japanese corporate culture, which is excessively dependent on administration, is actually a reflection of such a business climate.

This enlightened behavior, dependent on trust, is open to abuses. The recent series of securities scandals are a case in point, which has led to an active movement to correct a defective corporate structure. And such defects have been highlighted at the U.S.-Japan Structural Impediments Initiative meetings.

In light of these incidents, the appeal I would like to make to foreign governments is: "We are making an earnest effort to restructure ourselves. We are willing to correct those things that are wrong. At the



Survival of the fiercest may really mean that nobody wins. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOHO STUDIOS (KING KONG VS GODZILLA, 1962)

same time, we ask you to try to gain a better understanding of Japan's traditional values and view of management."

A few characteristics of Japanese businesses should be accorded proper recognition. An old-time maxim was: "A business enterprise has meaning when it lasts forever." The longevity of a business enterprise was in itself considered beneficial to both its employees and the public. That is no longer the belief today. What is questioned now is the very existence, not the continuity, of a business enterprise. No enterprise can comfortably exist unless the community recognizes its immediate and practical worth to all community members.

Such being the case, three kinds of symbiosis are needed for the years ahead.

The first is symbiosis between the business enterprise and general society. In the post-war era, Japanese enterprises developed products and sales strategies in three distinct stages. The initial stage was an age of needs. In that period, any goods that

were needed for everyday life and were in short supply could be sold as fast as they were manufactured. All that the manufacturers had to do was make goods that served a basic consumer need and market them at a reasonable price.

Next came an age of wants. The market became saturated with a wide variety of goods as supply exceeded demand, presenting consumers with a bewildering choice. Products without added value, such as a new design feature, would not find acceptance among consumers. In that age consumers attached importance to something besides quality and price. Distributors, therefore, actively advertised how their products were manufactured, what efforts were involved in their development and what functions they could perform. Since the customer had the power of choice, suppliers delivered ever fresher goods, even several times a day, to meet the increasingly finicky demand.

Used goods and obsolete products were

discarded without compunction. Products were ostentatiously packaged using plastic and other relatively costly materials. During the age of needs, it was said that the manufacturer stood upstream and the consumer downstream. But, in the age of wants, their positions reversed. As the consumer became "almighty," everything from manufacturing to marketing had to be arranged to please and pamper the public's tastes.

These patterns sound familiar, but we are now arriving at the third stage. In the new age, excess is coming under critical review. For example, when suppliers continue to provide flashy packaging simply to satisfy the customers' vanity, a huge quantity of plastic and other packaging materials are discarded once the products are taken home and opened. Those waste materials contribute to the deterioration of our environment, and they waste manpower and valuable natural resources.

If suppliers continue to increase the fre-



Symbiosis affords a path for each and a place for all. PHOTO: GARDEN OF THE HEIAN SHRINE, FROM KYOTO (THE JAPAN TIMES)

quency of deliveries to meet consumer demand for even fresher food products, there is a hidden cost to health. If perfectly good food, not quite up to the consumers' liking were to be discarded, it is not only wasteful in terms of labor and natural resources, it also increases the number of trucks on the road and the amount of fuel wasted in traffic congestion. Many services and added-value features have a net negative effect from a global perspective.

In this third stage, therefore, both the supplier and the customer must start thinking about the social and public aspects of our transactions and reassess our pursuit of private interests. The consumer must abstain from demanding excessive services of the supplier. The supplier, on his part, must acquiesce to some sacrifices for the benefit of society.

The second type of symbiosis lies between the business enterprise and individuals. Outside of their workplaces, entrepreneurs and salaried persons are indepen-

dent individuals and members of society, family and community. Many Japanese, however, have viewed themselves primarily as members of their company, paying much less attention to the fact of their independent existence as individuals.

In present-day Japan, land prices have risen so high that the average salaried person will not be able to afford his own home in Tokyo, or another conveniently situated place, even by the end of a career. Unless working hours are reduced, private life cannot be enriched. Business enterprise should pay greater attention to its employees as members of their communities, and to volunteer in community-oriented activities.

The third kind of symbiosis is between the business enterprise and the world. Japan is now number one in both the amount and balance of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Its direct investment overseas is also rapidly growing. Yet, Japan still experiences all sorts of friction and

misunderstandings with other countries.

Given this situation, we have to earnestly reflect on whether Japan's ODA and foreign branches of Japanese enterprises are truly beneficial to the host countries. In recent years, not only economic friction, but also cultural, social and even "human friction" have been increasing. To promote international cooperation, Japanese business enterprises must learn to become good corporate citizens, positively participating in their host communities.

Needless to say, there are bound to arise confrontations, competition and opposition. But the basic concept underlying symbiosis is that these entities can cooperate, even while competing, rather than reducing the relationship to a struggle of the stronger against the weaker. ●

KATSUHIRO UTADA

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honorary chairman of Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

and vice chairman of KEIDANREN.

MALAYSIA LOOKS EAST

Dr. Noordin Sopiee

*tackles the Asian market controversy
in a talk with Katsura Kuno*



KUNO: Let's start with your assessment of the economic situation among the Association of Southeast Asian nations.

SOPIEE: One of the very interesting trends in the last four years is the emergence of the four ASEAN tigers. If you look at the last 30 years, it's quite clear that Japan's economic performance has been remarkable as a developed country, but the fastest growing economies have been Northeast Asia's "dragons"—South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

But recently, there has been a significant shift. If it can be argued that the 1980s was the era of the Northeast Asian dragons, then I predict the 1990s will be called the era of the ASEAN "tigers." The sole bright spot in ASEAN used to be just a single economy—Singapore. But the tigers became three, with the addition of

Dr. NOORDIN SOPIEE,
Director general of Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies, editor of *Regional Cooperation in the Pacific Era* (1989), and former editor in chief of *The New Straits Times Press*.

Thailand and Malaysia, and now we're seeing a strong and vigorous performance by Indonesia. Brunei seems to be coming along, but, of course, this progress depends on the price of oil. Even the Philippines is slowly making a recovery. But what we're also seeing is a remarkable situation where the ASEAN tigers are now outrunning the Northeast Asian dragons and can be expected to continue to do so.

KUNO: The world is, at the moment, overwhelmed by the developments in Europe, when as a matter of fact, Southeast Asia deserves more attention.

SOPIEE: Of course, that's music to the ears of somebody from Southeast Asia, especially from ASEAN. You have an America that is diverted toward Europe and the Middle East and has no time for Asia and for East Asia. This is very unfor-

fortunate. We must make sure that the United States is fully engaged, not only in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, but also in East Asia because we are the most dynamic part of the world.

Fortunately for us, Japan is very much involved in East Asia, and we have seen the evolution of an East Asian community. When you look at economic history, it is quite clear that East Asia is one part of the world where there has been very little government effort at cooperation. And yet, the region, on its own, has been integrated very fast.

In terms of trade, from a much lower level, today more than 41 percent of East Asian trade is among ourselves. This is despite the fact that no governmental effort has been put into get-

ting this trade going.

Compare that with the European Community beginning from the Treaty of Rome in '57. Since then, intra-EC trade has grown from 30 percent to 58 percent after tremendous integration efforts. But we in East Asia have achieved 41 percent without any government intervention.

In terms of investment, more than 60 percent of all investments in ASEAN countries comes from East Asia—not only Japan, but Thailand, South Korea, Singapore—so we're seeing that East Asia is integrating without effort.

Europe 1992 is not going to create a new "Era of Europe." It's still going to be

KATSURA KUNO

Editor in chief
JAPAN UPDATE.



the "Era of Asia and the Pacific." So, some people say "let's get involved to try and make sure that the economies of East Asia develop in such a way as to be the most productive for all the countries involved—that we have the most productive system of interdependence possible." That is the idea of Asian economic cooperation.

KUNO: We hear a lot of comment, both positive and negative, about Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad's proposals for the East Asian Economic Group and his "Look East" policy.

A rose is a rose

SOPIEE: The minute Malaysia announced the proposal, Rafidah Aziz, the Malaysian minister of International Trade and Industry was sent to Singapore. Singapore responded, "We reject it, it's not a good idea." But after she talked it over, by the end of her visit, Singapore came out in full 100-percent support. This is a story, I think, of misunderstanding the idea. It is very fortunate that now it has been slowly accepted, and the concept has evolved with all the ASEAN countries putting in their own ideas.

Now it is called a different name. Instead of "East Asian Economic Group," it is called the East Asian Economic Caucus. What is beautiful about this is that not only has the idea been evolved by ASEAN, the idea of an East Asian caucus actually originated in Indonesia. And in the recent ASEAN economic ministers' meeting, there was full agreement to support the East Asian Economic Caucus.

So now all the ASEAN countries are aboard, everybody is supportive, and we can now bring it before the ASEAN summit in Singapore in January. Prime Minister Mahathir has said the name is not the important issue; a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

KUNO: To some people it doesn't seem very sweet. Americans in particular.

SOPIEE: Americans are overly concerned. They have told us that in this sort of organization, Japan will eat you up. And we say, "Well, we're not that easy to eat up and not that easy to digest."

At the same time, other countries are

told different things, that this would split the Pacific right down the middle. I think all these fears are completely unjustified. Japan is not a rapacious tiger that is going to come and eat us up. We can run; we know how to handle ourselves. And this is not going to divide the Pacific, especially if we keep our commitment to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation ministerial conference (APEC) and—the APEC and the Pacific processes working together.

A lot of people may share this negative perception but not really because of the designs of the architects. Instead these



DR. NOORDIN SOPIEE

fears reflect their own defensive psychology rather than the positive intentions of the makers of the East Asian Economic Cooperation concept.

We want the caucus to be an open regionalism; we want it GATT consistent; we want it to be open to the world; we want it to be egalitarian; we don't want it closed and discriminatory against anyone; we want investment to grow; we want cooperation in all the various fields; we do not want to damage APEC. We say it must be APEC-consistent; we want it to strengthen ASEAN.

These are the principles and these are sincerely what we want. But I think that with Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the ASEAN countries and Vietnam, we

can meet in a consultative forum and we can contribute. And the Americans one day will sit back and wonder why they were so worried.

This does not, and will not, damage Japan-U.S. relations, which remain critical not only for Japan, not only for the U.S., but for all of us in Asia. It's not going to damage anything or anybody.

KUNO: What relationships do you see ahead between East Asia and the other major centers of economic activity, Western Europe and North America?

SOPIEE: There's a good scenario and a bad scenario. I attended a meeting where Professor Chalmers Johnson from the University of California said that the world will either break up into two groups or three groups. He believes there will be managed trade—no free trade, no fair trade—only managed trade.

This is the worst-case scenario, but there are people who believe it has already happened. It has not happened, and we must create a coalition in the world to prevent this from happening. This is why East Asia is very important, because all the countries of East Asia including China need an open global trading system. None of us can live with managed trade because we cannot manage trade. If you have managed trade, it's the managers who are going to do the managing; we are not going to do the managing; we cannot afford that. We must have free trade, we must have fair trade, and we must have an open, global system. So we must create a coalition of forces not only in East Asia, but linking up with the rest of the world to work for this and fight for this principle.

No import fears

KUNO: I've heard it said that in the ASEAN model, there is a parallel input of manufactured goods alongside industrial development. This trend stands in contrast to many other countries, where the borders are closed to foreign manufactured goods, and industrial development is protected within a closed space. But in Malaysia, Thailand or Singapore, industrial growth has progressed rapidly even with their practice of open markets.

SOPIEE: In this, we have no choice. Even Indonesia's large population, when calculated in terms of purchasing power, is small. We have no choice but to rely on marketing to the rest of the world. The entire globe must be our marketplace.

Recently, the ASEAN economic ministers decided that we must establish an ASEAN free-trade area, and they have set a target of 15 years to create it. The fact and the reality are that we will achieve this goal, and, in my opinion, in less than 15 years. We have moved strongly toward a free-trade area not because of our love of ASEAN, but because all the countries, except the Philippines, have decided to cut tariffs in their own interest. The tariff cuts have been in our national interests because that's the way to make our industries stronger and more competitive. Thus, we are positioned to achieve free trade much faster than anybody believes.

KUNO: Malaysia seems like a peaceful, well-managed and modern society with a balanced economy.

Measured growth rate

SOPIEE: Malaysia has grown in the past two decades by average of 6.9 percent. That rate is not as good as the 11.1 percent registered by Japan in the '60s. That was an income-doubling campaign. I don't think anybody in the world can equal that rate. But 6.9 percent is still a respectable figure. Our objective now is to grow by 7.1 percent annually over the next five years.

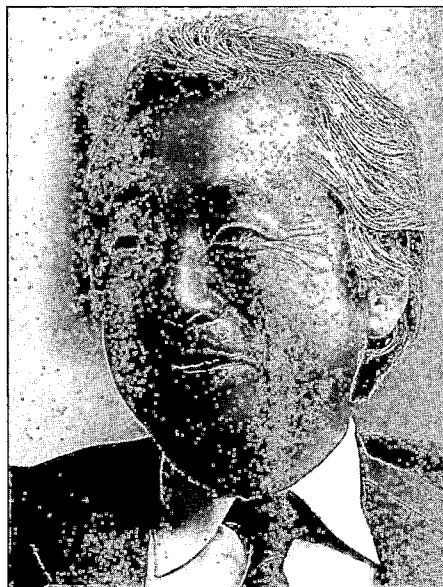
Oddly, I don't think we will achieve this goal because we will probably grow faster. Last year we achieved 10.1 percent real growth. This year, we will likely attain 8.9 percent, but even this is too fast. In subsequent years, we can expect more of the same, around 8 percent. This quick growth is not healthy for the economy. As it will tend to overheat, we are making every effort to slow down the economy, keeping in mind all the social factors, including the environment. Fortunately, Malaysia has been developing one step behind Thailand and two or three steps behind Japan.

As in the case of flying geese, being behind is not such a bad thing, as we can avoid some of the mistakes of those who

are ahead. I think Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong have damaged their natural environments. Thailand is now doing the same. So fortunately for us, we are trailing two steps, three steps behind.

KUNO: A good marathon runner always runs in second place, letting the leader overcome the air resistance, and then on the last lap, he darts ahead.

SOPIEE: We are committed to growth as a long marathon, and not as a hundred-meter dash. Ten seconds in a hundred meters can't be equated with a growth rate, nor can a thousand meters. This is a marathon,



KATSURA KUNO

so our objective is to grow by about 7.1 percent on average for the next 30 years.

KUNO: That's the income doubling plan?

SOPIEE: Yes, our national plan is to maintain a 7.1 percent growth rate, so when compounded, average income is doubled every 10 years.

KUNO: And after 30 years, you will have passed most countries in the world.

SOPIEE: No, after three decades we will achieve a standard of living just slightly better than the United States has today. This is in terms of purchasing power, rather than total money supply. Right now, the U.S. has about four times our purchasing power, and Japan possesses only 70 percent of that of the United States.

But we cannot do it without full coopera-

tion and partnership with Japan. Foreign investment is critical, and we would like to walk, maybe like a shy lady, hand-in-hand with Japan. But this wish depends entirely on Japan. We certainly hope Japan will agree to accompanying us on this journey.

KUNO: So far, then, how much have the Japanese shown their interest in Malaysia?

SOPIEE: This year, Japan is the number one investor in Malaysia. Last year and the previous year, Taiwanese investment was the largest. So we're not seeing a situation in which Japan holds the monopoly in the investment field. But we do believe Japan is in it for the long run and will be investing with us for a long time. Figures provided by the Keidanren indicate that investments in Malaysia and ASEAN as a whole are extremely profitable.

As everybody should be, we are worried about the global credit crunch. But we think that in a situation where there is a shortage of financial funds, there will be a flight to quality. And we think that the ASEAN countries are quality investment areas. So we're not worried that the Japanese will go away. What is important and interesting is that we want more value-added, high-technology, capital-intensive investments. We are not seeking the low end of labor-intensive or low-value added investments. And it seems that is the general direction most Japanese investors are heading toward.

KUNO: The strong presence of Taiwan raises the issue of Malaysia's relationship with China.

SOPIEE: Japan's realistic and principled policy on China, which is also supported by President George Bush, is absolutely correct. If we want to democratize China, the way to do it is by developing China's economy. And democracy will surely come.

But imposing an external will on China will simply not work. We expect China to perform remarkably in economic terms. Indeed, China should take off like an economic rocket in the '90s.

ASEAN, Japan and other nations must find a way of fully engaging China so that it becomes a full member of the East Asian community, so that we all live in one village—a peaceful and prosperous village. ●

REMEMBRANCE AND REGRET

*Older and wiser now, former Japanese pilots look back
on a fateful day 50 years ago*

ROSS LAVER

Twenty-one years ago, Tokuji Iitsuka decided to arrange a short visit to Hawaii on his way back to Japan from a business meeting in San Francisco. A construction company executive who lives near Tokyo, he did what millions of Japanese tourists like to do when they visit the sun-soaked Pacific resort—he played a round of golf, did some sightseeing and purchased a few souvenirs.

But there was also a more serious side to Iitsuka's Hawaiian stopover. As a former Japanese Imperial Navy pilot who took part in the 1941 surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, he was anxious to pay a visit to the USS Arizona Memorial, a museum dedicated to the 1,102 U.S. Navy men who died when the battleship's deck was struck by an armor-piercing Japanese bomb. Now 71, Iitsuka still remembers the sense of shame and regret he felt on that day in 1970 as he walked through a gallery displaying grainy, black-and-white photographs taken at the time of the attack.

"I couldn't even bring myself to look at the pictures of the Arizona because I felt so sorry for the men who served on that boat and who were killed during our attack," he said over a cup of coffee one morning recently. Iitsuka has vacationed in Hawaii twice since that visit 21 years ago—but both times, he says, he stayed well away from the memorial. "I felt so bad when I was there that I have never wanted to go back."

This fall, as U.S. veterans prepare to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, Iitsuka and many of the other surviving Japanese airmen who participated in the raid were once again forced to wrestle with their memories of that Sunday morning in December, 1941. Some, understandably, would just as soon not talk about their role in what then-U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt described as

an event "which will live in infamy." But, others offer up their recollections willingly, perhaps in the hope that an honest and forthright exchange with Japan's former enemies will help to heal the wounds that still fester half a century later.

One such veteran is Takeshi Maeda. When I visited Maeda one rainy evening recently at his home in Yoga, a prosperous suburb of Tokyo, he immediately ushered me into his living room and pointed to a large, black-and-white photograph hanging on the wall above the sofa. Taken in the fall of 1941, it shows Maeda in his pilot's gear, complete with leather jacket and helmet. Behind him is the plane he flew at Pearl Harbor, a torpedo bomber that carried a crew of three and a single, cigar-shaped 800-kilogram missile.

"I volunteered for the navy in 1938, as soon as I finished high school," Maeda recalled. "As a young man, I had always loved airplanes. So you can imagine how happy I was when I was allowed to enter the pilots' training program—out of 1,000 applicants, only 250 were accepted."

Three years later, Maeda and 71 other pilots were among 2,000 men assigned to the aircraft carrier Kaga when the ship's crew received orders to sail from the south coast of Kyushu to Etorofu Island, northeast of Hokkaido. When they arrived, they were told that their mission was to attack and destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor.

"There wasn't a person on that ship who wasn't excited," Maeda said. "Of course, we were very anxious about attacking a country that was so powerful, but we were young and impressionable. Our feeling was just, 'Let's do it.'"

Even so, Maeda and his fellow airmen were told that their mission could be called off at any time if U.S. and Japanese negotiators managed to resolve their countries'

dispute peacefully. He also says that they were instructed not to begin bombing the U.S. fleet before 7:30 a.m. local time on Sunday, December 7, to allow Japanese diplomats in Washington time to deliver a formal declaration of war to the U.S. government.

As it happened, the first Japanese planes appeared over Oahu at 7:55 in the morning. "One by one, our aircrafts swooped down over the mountains toward our targets," Maeda recalled. "As I began my descent, the early morning sun was shining in my eyes. All I could see was the shadowy outlines of the ships in the harbor. But I remember being surprised to see so many boats anchored so closely together. I thought to myself, 'The Americans were careless. They have made it easy for us to attack.'" Moments later, Maeda fired a torpedo that struck the U.S. battleship West Virginia.

It was only after the war, Maeda said, that he learned that the staff of the Japanese Embassy in Washington had been, as he put it, "too stupid or lazy" to deliver Japan's declaration of war. "As professional pilots, we never dreamed that we would be taking part in a sneak attack," he added. "I don't personally believe that I did anything wrong, but I feel that I should apologize to the American people."

Another former pilot who is anxious for reconciliation is Zenji Abe. Now 75, Abe graduated from the elite Japanese Imperial Naval Academy in 1933. He was a senior lieutenant and squadron leader at Pearl Harbor and flew a dive-bomber that dropped a 250-kilogram bomb on the USS Arizona.

After the war, Abe spent 15 months in a U.S. military prison in Guam. He later joined the Japanese Air Defense Force and, in 1953, served as a liaison officer at an air force base in Fort Benning, Ga.



Fresh out of school, Takeshi Maeda piloted this torpedo bomber in the Pearl Harbor attack.

Since then, he has met several American survivors of Pearl Harbor. During a visit to Texas last May, one of the U.S. veterans even took Abe flying in a plane similar to the one he flew 50 years ago, a restored Japanese fighter aircraft that was used in the 1970 movie, "Tora, Tora, Tora."

Although Abe praises the Americans he has met, he says that his knowledge of the United States in 1941 was virtually non-existent. "I really didn't know much about the U.S. at that time, except that it was a young country and that its people had come from all over the world," he said during an interview in his apartment near Tokyo. "As far as we were concerned, that meant that the Americans had no sense of national pride and no fighting spirit."

By the same token, Abe added, he doubts whether the Americans at that time knew much about Japan. "Recently, I re-

ceived a visit from an American who was a sailor in World War II. He told me that the Americans used to believe that all Japanese people wore glasses and could only afford paper airplanes."

Much has changed in the past 50 years, but Abe knows as well as anyone that many Americans remain deeply bitter about the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Last spring, he received an invitation to attend a meeting of the Atlanta chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. Abe accepted and drafted a statement, expressing his regret that the two countries had gone to war "because their leaders could not sufficiently understand their respective positions."

The planned reconciliation never took place. In a letter to the event's organizers last August, the national president of the PHSA, Gerald Glaubitz, said that the or-

ganization had no intention of sanctioning the Atlanta meeting. He insisted that "99.9 percent" of the PHSA's members were opposed to the meeting, adding: "I believe your timing in this is all wrong."

Maeda, who had already decided for health reasons not to go to Atlanta, was not surprised when the meeting was abruptly cancelled. "It's natural that there is still an anti-Japan mood among some Americans," he said. "Anyway, it has been 50 years since the attack. Why don't we wash away our bad memories and concentrate on the future?" Judging by this unfortunate experience in Atlanta, that's not likely to happen for some time yet. ●



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FRENCH TRADITION, JAPANESE METHOD

EIICHI TAKAHASHI

Staff writer, JAPAN UPDATE

Among the many wine concours held around the world, perhaps none is more prestigious than the annual Monde Selection sponsored by the European Community. Every year since 1966, wine-makers from all over the world enter their best wines for evaluation by judges designated by the Office International de la Vigne et du Vin (OIV). The Monde Selection may be called the "Olympics of Wine." To win such a prize is the highest honor for any vintner.

In its second annual competition, in 1967, the surprise winner was a wine-maker from a most unlikely country, better known for its rice than its grapes. Since then, for 25 consecutive years, Toshihiko Tsukamoto has won the Grand Prix.

For even a great estate vineyard in the homeland of wine, France, such an achievement would be remarkable, indeed, nothing less than incredible. Thus, the French readily admit that never has there been a vintner like Tsukamoto, nor is the world likely to see another.

Not surprisingly then, Tsukamoto has been enrolled in the *Commanderie du Bontemps*, the fraternity of Bordeaux vintners. Its exclusive membership counts those who have made distinguished contributions in the field of wine-making. Only three Japanese have ever received this honor: Tsukamoto, Keizo Saji, chairman of Suntory Ltd., and Tadao Suzuki, president of Mercian Corporation, the latter two for their role in importing French wine to Japan's market.

Tsukamoto, however, was rewarded for his enological skills. The *Commanderie* especially noted his success in producing high-grade Bordeaux varietals in Japan, the creation of a prize-winning joint venture with Chinese wineries, and his appointment as the only official OIV judge in

the entire Asian region.

As a youth, Tsukamoto never remotely believed that wine-making would become his life work. Born into a diplomat's family in 1931, his childhood was spent on the trail of his father's overseas assignments—in Sumatra, then part of the Dutch East Indies, and San Francisco. Later, he studied economics, with an academic career as his



Toshihiko Tsukamoto

goal. Nothing thus far would indicate any interest in pressing grapes.

His only childhood memory of wine, he recalls, is that his mother would give him a cup of wine mixed with hot water and sugar whenever he came down with a cold.

But then in 1957, his calling came to him like a bolt from the blue. The death of his maternal grandfather shocked him into the realization that he was the scion of a great family. The Furiya family had descended from court nobility, a lineage of more than 900 years. His great-grandfather, Tokugi Furiya, had won military glory as a loyalist of the Emperor Komei, crushing the Cho-shu army at the gates of the Imperial Pal-

ace in Kyoto. In complicated political and military maneuvering that has come to be known as the Meiji Restoration, the Cho-shu army gained the upper hand with the accession of Emperor Komei's successor.

With this reversal of fortunes, Furiya was purged from public service but took a novel form of retreat from political life. Endowed with an enterprising spirit, he started making wine in what is now Yamanashi Prefecture in 1885. Though details are unknown, he was undoubtedly one of the pioneers of wine-making in Japan.

Despite their tradition of sake brewing, the Japanese were not entirely unfamiliar with grape-based wines. After Perry's arrival, Western missionaries and merchants imported European wines. Even earlier in the wake of Francis Xavier's landing at Satsuma, the Portuguese introduced their ruby red ports as a sacramental wine. The rare intoxicant quickly became a status symbol for powerful warlords, but the supply of European-style wine was drastically reduced with *sakoku*, the Tokugawa shogunate's policy of banning trade. In the late 19th century, Kagoshima-born Kanae Nagasawa began producing premium wines at his Fountaingrove estate in Northern California's wine country, but Prohibition eventually ended the business.

Tsukamoto came into his inheritance by default. Tokugi's second son Komano-suke, Tsukamoto's grandfather, continued his pioneering father's pursuit of enology. Upon his death, his sole surviving son was already a professor at a university and had no intention of continuing the family business. After a family council, Tsukamoto was chosen for the business.

But the business was on the verge of collapse. Ignoring his relatives' pressures to earn more money, he concentrated on learning the vintner's craft.

The novice wine-maker frequented the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research, the foremost center for fermentation and enzyme research. Impressed by concepts of quality control introduced during the Allied Occupation, he measured changes in the sugar content and acidity of his grape mash and studied the effects of temperature. Despite his chronic shortage of funds, he bought expensive premium wines to study their characteristics and analyze their tastes for the purpose of statistics. Later, he visited M. A. Amerine, a chemistry professor at the University of Southern California, to acquire the most advanced zymologic technology. After many attempts, he finally separated out his ideal yeast strain in 1960.

Cuttings of the best varieties—Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Merlot from Chateau Margaux of Bordeaux—were introduced, selected and adapted at his vineyard in Yamanashi. “What anyone else would take 30 years to learn, I had to do in five,” he recalled.

His grapes are carefully cultivated on well-ventilated latticework in his vineyard. The annual harvest amounts to about 4 tons per hectare, a low yield compared with 10 tons for Japanese table grapes and some 18 tons in France (except for extra-grade varieties whose yield is only 6 tons per hectare). What the harvest lacks in bulk, it more than compensates in sweetness and flavor.

But viticulture alone would have amounted to an economic disaster without his ingenuity and expertise. The secret, he says, lies in cooler fermentation temperatures. Traditionally, the common sense among wine-makers was that the grape mash could not be fermented any lower than 16 degrees Celsius.

Makers of white wine, thus, faced a per-



Chateau Lumiere's well-tended vineyard in Yamanashi Prefecture is the starting point for an extraordinary wine.

petual dilemma. At higher temperatures, yeast reproduces more quickly, but so do the unwanted bacteria that speed up oxidation and deteriorate the flavor. But at lower temperatures, the yeast become inactive, and fermentation halts.

Enter the traditional process of brewing sake. Japanese sake has long been fermented at approximately 10 C. Now, it becomes clear why Tsukamoto is the Grand Prix winner for the past quarter of a century.

Applying the cool, slow method of master sake brewers, he succeeded in fermenting his wine at an astonishing 6 C. He disclosed his findings to the public, but no one would believe the validity of the method for some time. In France, however, Professor Denis Dubourdieu faithfully followed the instructions with perfect results. Today, low-temperature fermentation is the industry standard.

Yet Tsukamoto asserts the optimum fermentation temperature cannot be expressed by any mathematical formula or in any words: There is something intuitive

about the wine-making process, attainable only after years of experience.

His advice to newcomers to the vintner's craft: “Do the commonplace perfectly; incomplete work is sure to fail,” and “Microorganisms never tell a lie.”

Tsukamoto's label is called “Chateau Lumiere,” after the French word for “light.” The name is inspired by “St. Joseph the Carpenter,” a masterpiece of Georges de Latour (1593-1652), known as the “Painter of Light.”

Yet with consummate modesty, he prefers to keep his own achievements in obscurity. “With the exception of natural conditions afforded by God, I've done all that I could do,” he sighs.

“But, my work still has a long way to go to catch up with such superfine wines as Chateau Lafite, Chateau Margaux, and Chateau Latour. If some day I can make something comparable in quality to any of those wines, I won't mind that I die. This goal keeps me working with hope.”

As he expressed this vision, his eyes sparkled with a fleeting fleck of light. ●

AMERICAN KNOW-HOW AND THE MIRACLE

Part III

Quality control comes to Japan . . . and stays

SEIYA IKARI

Between 1954 and 1958, over 2,000 Japanese businessmen participated in study visits to the United States on programs sponsored by the Japan Productivity Center.

"All were frontline managers who proceeded to apply the new theories and techniques they learned to their own situations," recalls Juhei Sugaya, a retired corporate manager. "Without this training, the rapid modernization of Japanese management through the application of American management theories and techniques would have been impossible."

These managers belonged to a new generation that replace the older managers who had been banished from the business world by the Allied Occupation authorities for their wartime cooperation with the militarist government. These younger managers put their trust in scientific, rational modes of thought and were resistant to the spiritualism that had prevailed in wartime Japan. They, therefore, readily accepted American management techniques.

Yet, it was not always easy for these management methods to take root in Japan, since they were developed in a country with totally different cultural assumptions. Some of the introduced techniques gradually faded away, while others were slowly transformed to suit the Japanese corporate culture.

The starting point under the new system was to standardize human labor, that is, to rationalize and objectify manufacturing processes and organizational structures. Jobs, for example, are standardized so that two workers could achieve the same result,

regardless of differences in their education or experience. Workers with the same job could then be paid the same wages, irrespective of education or age. This simple and fair system is necessary to manage a workforce from different racial, linguistic and educational backgrounds in a country like the United States.

But Japanese society provided different social conditions, especially its homogeneity in regard to race and language. In white-collar jobs, the Japanese decision-making and responsibility are assigned and conducted on the basis of "group efficiency," under which each member has no specific job description but seeks to help other members with common tasks.

Understandably, then, American management techniques did not take root in fields where human factors were particularly important. For example, the wage system based on job description gained little acceptance in Japan. Instead, wages are generally set according to age and education, plus a certain degree of consideration for personal capabilities.

On the other hand, Japanese enterprises readily accepted statistical and quantitative techniques, such as those related to marketing, industrial engineering and the introduction of computers.

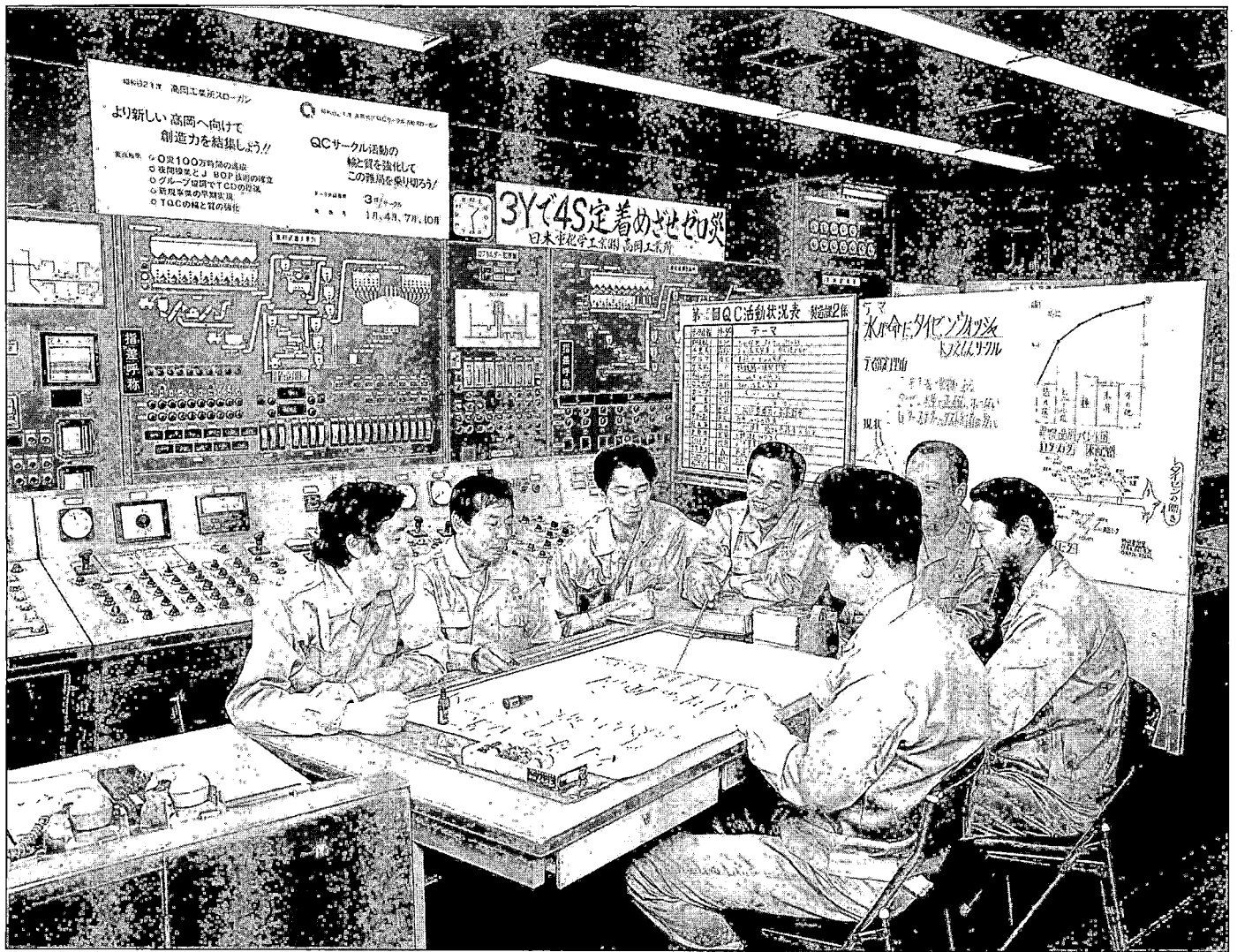
Among the statistical techniques applied by professional experts, quality control (QC) has achieved results in Japan totally different from those in the United States.

Quality control originated as a method to eliminate the occurrence of product failures through statistical analysis. In 1950, Dr. W. E. Deming, an American statistics

expert, came to Japan to hold seminars on QC, marking the beginning of the prominence of QC in the national business culture. Quality control has taken deep root in Japanese enterprises as a means to improve product quality, but it has been backed by uniquely Japanese techniques.

One such Japanese technique was the establishment in 1951 of the Deming Prize by the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers. This organization served as a center to promote quality control in Japan, and the prize was intended to promote competition among corporations through the reputation enhancement that would ensue from receiving such a prestigious award. Forty years after the establishment of the Deming Prize, Japanese companies are still making all-out efforts to win this coveted honor.

Another, and more important, factor leading QC to flourish in Japan was that it was made into a self-motivated movement among job-site groups. Instead of guidance by an expert QC staff that points out failures and advises on quality improvements, tens and hundreds of "QC circles" were born at job sites all across individual corporations. Groups of approximately ten members constituting a job site became responsible for organizing themselves to improve product quality. Meetings of such QC circles were held with the participation of all job-site members, irrespective of supervisory instructions, in order to discover problems impeding QC improvement in their area and to discuss ways to resolve them. QC circles were created not only in manufacturing industries, but also in ser-



A quality circle at Japan Metals & Chemicals Co., Ltd., Takaoka plant. PHOTO COURTESY OF QC CIRCLE MAGAZINE

vice industries including banks, insurance companies, and department stores. In 1961 the Asahi Shimbun reported that a total of approximately 118,000 QC circles existed, with over a million participants.

Japanese corporations made it a rule to hold an annual all-company meeting to announce the achievements of individual QC circles, where the best-performing circle was recognized with an award by the president. Then each company would apply as a candidate for the Deming Prize. Thus the American technique of scientific quality control was successfully turned into a tool to improve productivity in Japan by adopting the form of universal employee participation in corporate management.

Japanese management practices such as lifetime commitment and paternalism were first noted by James Abegglen, and later came to be evaluated by other American scholars as a major source of Japanese economic strength. This recognition in turn encouraged Japanese self-confidence.

There are other similar examples of Japanese business practices gaining favorable recognition.

The decentralization of large Japanese corporations received high marks from Peter F. Drucker in his book *The Practice of Management*. These practices were later re-introduced from the U.S. as decentralized business divisions in the 1967 Japanese translation of Alfred Sloan Jr.'s book *My Years with General Motors*, an account of his years as GM's president.

In those days Japanese corporations were rapidly expanding in scale. They decided to decentralize by adopting divisional systems as recommended by these books. A great deal of interest was also focused on Matsushita Electric Industrial Company, whose corporate organization had been under a divisional system since before the war. It is perhaps ironic that a conventional Japanese management technique was regarded as modern since it also existed in the United States. Matsushita's

method came to be "authorized" and re-evaluated only after being filtered through American management techniques.

While Japanese industries continued to grow stronger throughout the 1970s and 1980s, their American counterparts grew relatively weaker. The confidence of Japanese businesses in their own ways of management grew stronger to the degree that some have asserted, "There is nothing more to learn from America." The need to reflect oneself in the American "mirror" is no longer felt by Japanese enterprises.

But is it really true? At least in one area—globalization—American businesses are still many steps ahead of Japanese corporations, many of which have only recently set up operations abroad. Maybe there is yet more for Japanese managers to learn. ●



SEIYA IKARI is editor in chief of the monthly *MANAGEMENT TODAY* and has served as an editor with the Diamond Publishing Co.

PERILS OF TRANSLATION

Nuance and meaning can get lost in the process

CHIEKO MULHERN

The art of translating has much in common with reverse engineering. The method is the same: to take a product and dismantle it into its components. The difference, however, seems to rest in the outcome. After putting the pieces back together, reverse engineering can accomplish an improvement of the original product—but can translation make the same claim?

Anyone with bilingual ability who has used translations as classroom texts cannot fail to notice that a translation sometimes conveys messages exactly opposite to those intended by the original work, or it may read like a different story entirely.

Nowadays, glaring cases of mistranslation seldom occur due to innocent errors as in the past. Instead they often result from cultural factors, some beyond the translator's control.

Perhaps the most serious or ironic of them all is the problem of historical limitation. A time lag exists between the East and the West in the evolution of narrative techniques. By the early eleventh century, Japanese women had perfected what today's critics recognize as the narrated monologue. In this mode of storytelling, the narrator voices the thoughts of a fictional character without using quotation marks or the pronoun "I."

In the West, however, the writing mode that has predominated since the 19th century is psycho-narration, through which the narrator describes a character's

thoughts through the use of such mental words as "she felt" and "he thought." In translating *The Tale of Genji* in the 1930s, Arthur Waley found it necessary to convert Lady Murasaki's interior monologue into the familiar convention of psycho-narration, as in the following passage:

"Though it was now a long time since *he* had communicated with (Lady) Rokujo and *he* knew that *she* must be deeply offended, *he* felt that no kind of intimacy with *her* would ever again be possible." (I, p.108; italics are mine.)

The original version is much shorter and simpler with no personal pronouns or words referring to a mental action: "It was embarrassing to have remained out of touch for so long, but how would it feel to have a close encounter again?"

Murasaki's passage is not the narrator's impersonal description of Genji's mental state but obviously the prince's own inner monologue concerning the shock of having seen the horrendous vision of Lady Rokujo's spirit haunting his wife Aoi. So, if any personal pronoun is to be supplied, it should be "I." But Waley was obliged to add five third-person pronouns and two words describing the action of his mind, along with a lot of extra words to make sense to the Western readers.

Such a conversion in narrative modes is not exactly a mistranslation but, as a result, the emotional impact is considerably diluted. Thus, Lady Murasaki's narrative skill passes largely undetected in the West, even

though she predates James Joyce by some 900 years in the consummate use of unmarked monologue and the stream-of-consciousness technique.

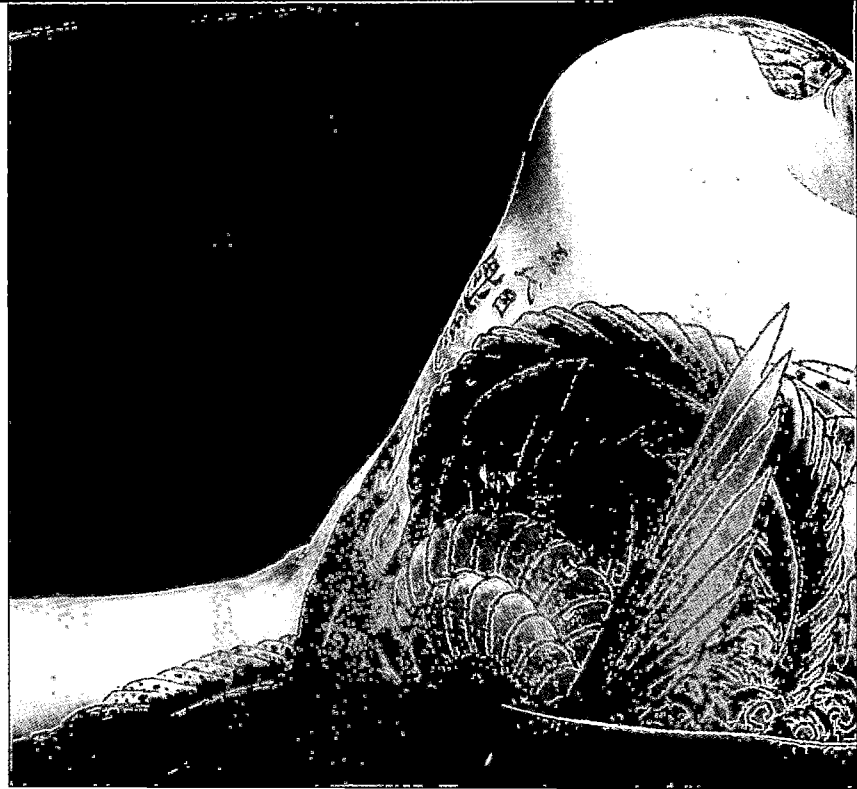
More regrettably, most translators and Western editors still tend to favor the exclusive or uniform use of the psycho-narration mode that, admittedly, makes for an easier time for the contemporary reading public, but this expediency is often responsible for taking the sparkle out of Japanese novels and making their style appear quite monotonous, lackluster and quaint.

We are much like Hamlet, never really resolving the question: To be or not to be—literal or readable, as the case may be. That is the dilemma every translator faces.

In the process of turning Japanese fiction into English, the translator actually plays the multiple roles of critical reader, cultural interpreter and author of a literary work that is sometimes called upon to stand on its own merit.

Every word selected among possible synonyms conveys nuances and connotations in accord with the translator's own value judgments. Serious problems arise when the editor does not share the same footing in terms of moral, aesthetic or social values, and maybe not even a common-sense frame of reference.

To cite a few examples from experience, it took considerable explaining to convince an American copy editor that a shaven male face with a refreshing touch of greenish hue around the chin could be consid-



A thing of beauty, easily misinterpreted

PHOTOS: ABOVE, IREZUMI-SHI ICHIDAI, KANAGAWA SHIMBUN-SHA;

RIGHT, RANSHO: JAPANESE TATTOOING, SHOGAKUKAN

ered "attractive" in Japan—and is not to be confused with what Americans call "the 5 o'clock shadow." And in my latest translation of a business novel, I had to argue vehemently to retain technical terms including Toyota's "just-in-time" *kanban* system and acronyms for English terms such as "QC," for quality control, that are well-known to Japanese businessmen and routinely used in conversation, even though many American readers may not be familiar with these.

A more difficult adjustment than the differences in aesthetic taste or mundane custom is the variance in moral values. When I was asked to evaluate proposals for translation projects, I came across unflattering descriptions of a young female character unwarranted in the original. It came to light later that the translator had a negative view of "office love" between a woman clerk and her married superior, and interpreted her every movement in a love scene as embarrassingly ungraceful, rather than recognize that her awkwardness indicated inexperience and shyness.

Perhaps the most conspicuous example of moral judgment playing havoc with a translation occurred with Junichiro Tanizaki's short story "Tattoo." The tale transpires in a fictional time when "physical beauty was the chief aim of life," and beauty was equated with power in a mythical Japan. The protagonist, a male tattooer, engraves a design of a huge "courtesan spider" on a young woman's back "pouring

his whole soul into it."

In Tanizaki's original, the woman says in a grateful acknowledgment, "Master, you have been the first to become my fertilizer." The undisguised agricultural term, which Tanizaki uses more than once, is changed in two existing translations, rendered instead as a menacing declaration: "You shall be my first victim."

Since even a first-year student of the Japanese language could not possibly confuse "fertilizer" with "victim," this change must have been imposed by the editors, unaware of Tanizaki's lifetime literary theme. As a consequence, Tanizaki's version of the Pygmalion myth is turned into a battle of the sexes with an ironic or didactic twist, by which the persecuting male ends up the loser to become persecuted in turn. Western scholars of women's studies have no way of knowing that, as early as 1910, a Japanese male writer might have envisioned a fertile alliance of the male and the female merging through the nurturing power of art and beauty.

In reviewing the authorized translation by Frank Baldwin of Shintaro Ishihara's controversial book, *The Japan That Can Say No* (Simon & Schuster 1991), Janet Goff finds Ishihara justified in his claim that "the Japanese need to become more assertive in articulating their views" and calls attention to "the need for caution with regard to translations" (*The Japan Quarterly*, July-September 1991).

Indeed, translations can create interna-

tional friction in more ways than one. Aiming for readability and plausibility seems a tactically shrewd stance, but at what cost? How much Americanization of the content and expression can be allowed before a work ceases to be useful to foreign readers as a source of information? In terms of realism in verbal expression, is it really natural to make Japanese male characters utter curse words just as their American counterparts do by force of habit?

Choices become more complicated in non-verbal communication. I stood my ground over a passage describing a company president with arms crossed over his chest in deep thought. My copy editor had wanted to make him stretch his legs instead, for recent theories defined crossed arms as a defensive posture of a person with something to hide. If translations continue to transpose everything into familiar contexts, Westerners can hardly learn to communicate with the Japanese, and scholars would not know they are discussing different versions of a story.

A bad translator may not deserve to be hanged, as a proverbial author once decreed, but the responsibility of the job is heavier than ever. ●



CHIEKO MULHERN

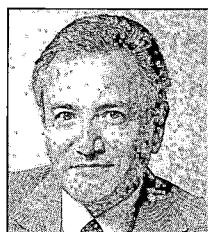
Professor at the University of Illinois, she received a PhD in literature from Columbia University. Her most recent translation is

Shinya Arai's *SHOSHAMAN: A TALE OF CORPORATE JAPAN* (University of California Press).

Coming to terms with diversity

NEW REALITIES

GEORGE FIELDS



A while back, I discovered that taboo words broadcast by electronic media differ in Japan and the United States. Before going on air, a Japanese moderator reminds participants in spontaneous discussion panels that they can express their views freely but must be careful not to use certain words. No, these are not swear words—there are so few of them in Japanese anyway, and the average citizen uses them only on extreme occasions, if ever—so warnings against public utterances are hardly necessary.

In Japan, taboo phrases include *mekuraban o osu* (to blindly affix a seal, that is, agree without really examining the document), *tsumbo sajiki ni oku* (leave something in a deaf person's seat, or to keep a person uninformed), *kata chimba na taisho*, (a one-legged treatment, an unbalanced viewpoint), *no ga mahishi-teiru* (paralysis of the brain), and so on. In other words, it is taboo to refer to any physical defect. Only when made conscious of the habit, do we realize how many are in common use.

On the other hand, to "turn a deaf ear," "have a blind spot," "limp home," "suffer paralysis of the mind," and other such terms are only beginning to be perceived as taboo phrases in the English-speaking world, and have been considered inoffensive compared with other sets of banned words that are regarded as either "sexist" or "racist."

The clue to the difference in attitudes was offered recently by a young Japanese female commentator during a discussion session for a magazine. One of the few women to attend a prestigious post-graduate program, set-up for the ostensive purpose of training future Japanese political leaders—many in her class were sons of incumbent politicians—this remarkable young Japanese woman set her target on working for a U.S. congresswoman, who she had glimpsed on a television news program. Indeed she did join the representative's staff in Washington. I raised the issue of phrases forbidden by Japanese media in the course of our discussion. She remarked how she was at first

struck that so many handicapped persons could go about their way in public places in the U.S., until she realized that, in a country that subscribes to the concept of equal opportunity, active participation of the physically handicapped is encouraged; therefore, the words have few embarrassing connotations.

DIVERSITY NO LONGER ABSTRACT

On the other hand, there is greater American sensitivity toward "sexist" or "racist" phrases which are most definitely taboo. From around the mid-'80s, the Japanese have rapidly undergone a learning process in this respect. *Kokusaika*, internationalization, became the buzz word, and Japanese corporations started studying the matter in earnest.

As a result of a speech I gave to Nikkeiren, the Japan Federation of Employers, on the contrast between Japanese and Western styles of personnel management, I received an invitation to speak at a manufacturing company in the Nagoya area. This supplier's main customer had announced its intention to setup a plant in the U.S. In the long run, the potential loss of domestic orders was looming large, so the possibility of their own excursion into the unknown wilds of the U.S. was a hot topic in the company.

Expecting about 30 or so top managers, I was startled to confront a hall filled to capacity—presumably from section chief to director—in a sea of identical overalls. Although I had planned to highlight my talk with concepts and values that differed between Japanese and American business societies, I started by blurting out remarks that were unscripted.

"There are two words that make American managers tremble, but these hardly exist in Japan," I explained.

"'Racist' and 'sexist.' Let me illustrate what I mean. Please look to your left and right. Well, since you are Japanese managers, the chances are that you have known your neighbors as colleagues in the company for quite some time—probably, at least 10 years.

George Fields is chairman & CEO of ASI Market Research, Japan and author of FROM BONSAI TO LEVI'S and GUCCI ON THE GINZA. His latest book in Japanese, *TONO TO JYUYAKU* (The Lord and His Minions) deals with the issue of heterogeneity for the Japanese organization.



From Samoa to sumo, Konishiki plays by the rules and is now one of the guys, and a big one at that. Here, he gives a heave-ho to Takatoriki in the battle for mastery of the ring.

KYODO PHOTO

In other words, you have worked together and you know the company well. In the United States, the chances are that quite a number of you will find neighbors who have switched jobs from another company and will be with you for only a few years. They don't necessarily share with you the same views of the company."

Of course, all the listeners were Japanese and granted the percentage is lower in manufacturing, even than in the U.S., there were no female employees present. I went on to explain that in the U.S., you could also expect a significant proportion of those in the next seat to be from a different ethnic background and for some to be females. In short, none of those present had any experience in dealing with diversity, a new skill they would have to learn fast.

Since then, females have become a significant factor for graduate recruitment in a society which is aging more quickly than any other and with its consequent labor shortage. Long outside the infrastructure, women bring a different set of values to the corporation. This is not a uniquely Japanese phenomenon, although with a later start than in the U.S. and other countries.

But the entry of foreigners—*gaijin*—will after all, introduce values that are, well, even more alien. Though politicians and bureaucrats still seem to be obsessed with preserving internal harmony at all expense, Japanese businesses are being forced to move from a comfortable homogeneous existence to that of heterogeneity.

Looking at an annual report, I remarked to a Japanese CEO that he will have more *gaijin* employees than Japanese, and for an instant, he seemed nonplussed. Perhaps he only thought of his employees as Japanese, and somehow the *gaijin* were under some-

body else's jurisdiction. But not for long, if his company is to survive as a global entity.

Traditionally, there have been only two ways of employing *gaijin*—the professional baseball model and the sumo wrestling style. The former has been the mainstream preference. The Japanese word *suketto* is literally a "helping person," and is applied to American baseball players hired to boost a Japanese team. More accurately, it means "gun for hire." Kurosawa's cinema masterpiece "The Seven Samurai" describes the role of a *suketto*—those brought in for a specific task who will return from whence they came when it is accomplished.

In the sumo world, on the other hand—so long as there is absolute conformity to the association's prescribed values—you can rise strictly on performance, and there is no discrimination. But only the exceptional few can go the distance. A Canadian who ascended quite rapidly in the lower ranks, abruptly departed, saying that he could not stand the lack of privacy any longer. What he really meant was that he could not change his sense of values for the sake of the group.

HETEROGENEITY

Professional baseball's *suketto* approach, or the sumo stables' demand for absolute conformity, may work in the world of sports but not in business, where winning out in the competitive struggle depends on high employee morale, which in a global context, can best be achieved by coming to terms with diverse values. Since success in these terms will determine the future viability of Japanese enterprise in the world context, business pragmatism should prevail, and this would not be to the ultimate detriment of Japanese society. ●

A MATTER OF DIRECTION

The key to change in women's lives

JEAN PEARCE

There are times when the simplest of choices or a routine bureaucratic decision can bring about long-lasting and often unexpected changes. Today, we will consider some of these effects. Our focus will be on women. Our time will be the immediate postwar years.

As we look at Tokyo today with its impressive buildings and overhead highways, it is hard to realize that most of the city was leveled during the war. Fires had devoured the low wooden dwellings that had once crowded residential areas. There was a desperate need for housing.

The solution was to build apartments. Large areas were reclaimed and dedicated to housing complexes. Speed was essential, and many Western building techniques were adopted. A traditional Japanese house is crafted. There was neither time nor space for such workmanship.

Somewhere, in some office, a decision was made to install doors that opened in and out instead of doors that slid from side to side. These doors had locks.

Who could have guessed the fallout from this decision.

Suddenly, women had a new freedom. They could go out and lock the door behind them.

This was a new experience. In the traditional Japanese house, the kind where most women had lived before, doors locked from the inside. The woman was expected to be the guardian of the home, never going out except for quick visits to the neighborhood stores for daily supplies. Not much was bought at a time. There was little storage room for tomorrow's foods, and no refrigerators to keep them in any-

way. A wife's quick trips to the store might provide her only social contact during the day.

It was an exciting experience for women who previously had been confined to their houses. At first, there would be a tentative exploration of a nearby department store or park. Gradually their horizons expanded. Soon they were meeting friends, going shopping, joining in social activities. Now their homes had doors that opened outward into a new world.

That new world meant that she could get a job. It was not only government encouragement that put women into the workforce. It was also that they were given a key that allowed them to leave home.

At some point of time in those early days, women began to put away their kimono. Western dress was so convenient, especially for women who were accustomed to spending at least an hour to put on a kimono properly. Nor could kimono be washed in the new washing machines that most families were buying. Kimono had to be taken apart, washed piece by piece, and then restitched. There wasn't time for that any more in the busy world of

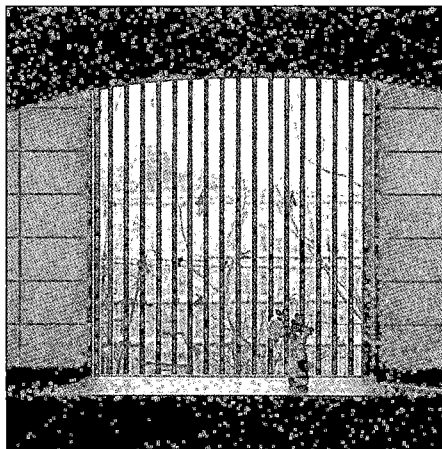
Japan where everyone was dedicated to "catching up" after the war.

Women still wear kimono. There are times when kimono is the only proper choice, like weddings, funerals and graduations. Observers tend to liken young girl graduates dressed in brightly colored kimono, giggling and fluttering about, to a cluster of butterflies, and it is an apt description. But when the party's over the kimono will be carefully folded, encased in a paper wrapper and put away. Kimono are not an option for women who climb subway stairs, drive cars or work in an office.

Another new addition to Japanese life was television. People jammed the sidewalks in front of department stores to watch demonstrations of black and white TV sets. Soon they were buying them. In a few more years, the goal of the average Japanese would be to own the three C's—a cooler (air conditioner), a car and a color TV.

Many of the programs were educational. Before the 1964 Olympics, television launched a preparation program that taught Japanese how to interact with foreigners. There were occasional imported shows. Someone, somewhere, selected "I Love Lucy."

Most of the plots must have been incomprehensible to the Japanese. People were, however, captivated by Lucy's house—the size of it, that big refrigerator, the stove with an oven. In those days, many Japanese, even in the cities, simmered their rice over small charcoal stoves called *shichirin* and did their cooking on a two-burner gas hotplate. Ovens were virtually unknown.





OPPOSITE: The narrow view of the past. ABOVE: The convenience of modern living PHOTOS: JUTAKU-KENCHIKU, KENCHIKUSHIRYO KENKYUSHA

And then the furnishings, with chairs and tables and beds, carpets instead of *tatami* mats on the floors and *zabuton* (cushion) to sit on, draperies at the windows, all so different from the usual Japanese interiors. Not a few Japanese dreamed of the day when they could live in an I-Love-Lucy house.

Well, the house or apartment of today's average Japanese won't look like Lucy's, but there is a refrigerator and a stove with an oven in designer colors, and livingrooms will be furnished with Japanese versions of Western furniture. One admirable adaptation is a cross between cushion on the floor and a chair, a low-slung model that holds the sitter at a point halfway between the two. And you'll probably find a bed in

stead of a futon, the traditional floor mattress.

Certainly we can't credit Lucy for the change, but for some Japanese she planted a dream.

Are there more changes ahead? You bet! Whether it is a tiny apartment (called "mansion" in Japan) or a conventional house, the new goal is to express one's individuality in decorating. There is a surge of decorator magazines which show how to coordinate colors, choose accessories and select furnishings. Accentuating individuality in what is often called a consensus society is a big change.

It never ends! Entertaining at home has not been the Japanese pattern. Most parties, even simple gatherings, are held at

hotels, restaurants or clubs. Now that's changing. If you have a house or apartment that you have decorated to reflect your lifestyle, you are going to want people to see it.

So you have a party. Come on over! Different rules apply at home. Forget the formality required of the proper guest at a hotel reception. People are more relaxed, they have more fun.

Could it all have started by giving women a door key? ●



JEAN PEARCE

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THE ROYAL TREATMENT

An auto parts distributor makes recycling a public concern

HIROSHI NAKADA

The time is 7:30 a.m., the start of the morning rush. The street in front of Kita Senszoku station of the Tokyu Oimachi commuter line looks like a battlefield on the morning after. Cigarette butts, wads of crumpled flyers, empties strewn around the beer vending machines and splotches of chewing gum belie Japan's reputation for cleanliness. The mounds of household garbage that were supposed to be divided between different pickup days—three for burnable trash, one for non-flammables—is ignored by some of the residents. And after the cats and crows have had their pickings and with the fallen leaves swirling around the mess, it's not a pretty sight.

Despite their neatness in the home—where responsibility is clearly defined—the Japanese can be a slovenly lot when it comes to the commons. Public places are everybody's to use, yet are nobody's responsibility. And nowhere in this crowded nation is there a more public areathan the front of a train station.

Yet suddenly, a middle-aged man appears, briskly walking down the street, and picks up an empty, tosses it into his bag, and then searches for another. A serious-looking fellow squats down by a storm drain and fishes out bits of paper caught inside the sewer grill. An eager young man trots down the street, stops at trash receptacles and sorts out the paper and aluminum cans and hauls them away as if he had found a hidden treasure. Finally, a team of street sweepers swiftly brush the sidewalk. By the time crowds of commuters pour into the station and shopkeepers open their

shutters, the street—and a sense of civic pride—is once again pristine. A small victory for the commons. Every weekday morning, all year long.

But the cleanup squads are not from the public sanitation department. They're made up of ordinary citizens, with two

and community service.

Royal runs a nationwide chain of Yellow Hat retail auto parts stores that sell tires, oil, car audio systems and spark plugs. Its wholesale division also supplies other auto parts stores. And with car sales rising over the past two decades, business has been good. Established in 1961, Royal recorded gross sales of over ¥46,000 million (\$353 million) and an operating profit of ¥1,320 million (over \$100 million) in 1990. A tidy sum for a company with some 730 employees. These are the kind of figures that attract investor attention. So Royal made its first public stock offering on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's over-the-counter market in October last year.

At a hot company like Royal, one expects an image of employees intensely devoted to the latest sales results crowding around a bar chart, especially in a fiercely competitive market contested by specialty, discount and do-it-yourself stores.

But not so at Royal. Its company ethos is the exact opposite of this stereotype. Not that it's laid-back. Few companies run a tighter ship. Yet company profits remain a secondary goal.

What motivates it is the service-oriented philosophy of the 58-year-old company founder and president, Hidesaburo Kagi-yama. Royal is an intense and devoted company in an entirely different sense. The bottom line of his thinking is that an enterprise should be designed to contribute widely to the welfare of society and not be derailed by the pursuit of profits. This often means vigorously performing activities that have a positive impact on society.



This public service announcement about Japan's burgeoning garbage crisis was a paid commercial. things in common: their zeal for public service and their place of employment—Royal Ltd. The company doesn't make its money in the sanitation business, even though its headquarters keeps space for a recycling center to sort the morning's pick-up. That's strictly a volunteer operation

Cleaner streets, for example, don't just look better—they are greatly appreciated by the local people. And the positive impression leads to better habits. Now local residents are separating and piling their garbage more carefully, and other citizens have started to clean up their streets on their own. Furthermore, Ota Ward has officially recognized the company's contribution. Three years after its start, the morning program has renewed civic pride in a cleaner urban environment.

The philosophy is not limited to the main office. Similar activities are carried out by Royal's 140 Yellow Hat retail stores nationwide. But not on command from the center. Instead of just signing a fat contract to become a Yellow Hat franchise, the

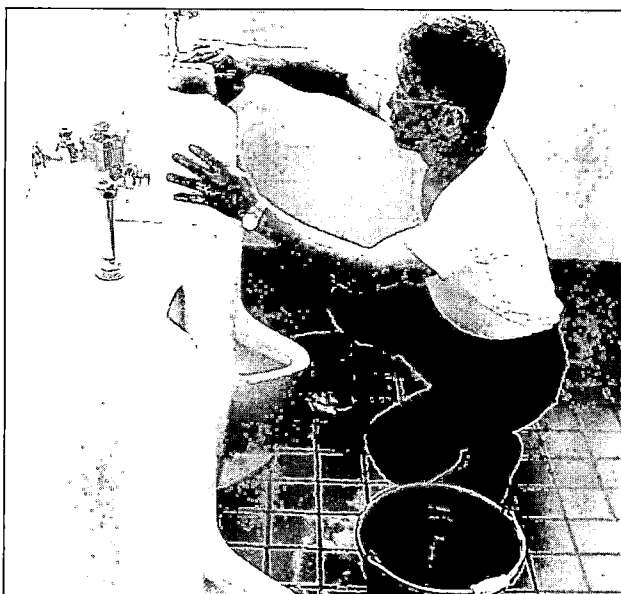
main prerequisite is that any new member should share an appreciation for Royal's company philosophy.

But there is something more to this philosophy than a simple task well done. In the premodern past, merchant houses used to sweep the roads in front of their establishments daily and splash water to hold down the dust. Merchants, large and small, assisted their communities in a hundred different ways—participating in local festivals, providing emergency relief and sponsoring talented, but poor, young students. This sort of public spirit disappeared with the industrial revolution. Royal is a thoroughly modern company that is reconnecting to that older, public-minded tradition.

Yet Royal stunned cynical television

viewers with a commercial, which it aired some 400 times last July. Showing a person separating garbage, the commercial asks: "Are you sure your heart isn't being tossed out with your garbage?"

Most companies use television commercials to sell a product or improve their corporate image. But this commercial had only one intent—to impress on Japanese viewers the serious dimensions of Japan's trash-disposal problem. An opinionated advertisement that openly addresses the issue of the global environment is unthinkable in a commercial for a non-governmental, for-profit business. The single line "Importance of small acts—Yellow Hat" in the final three seconds could hardly be considered a company public-relations



The cleanup starts at the top.

ABOVE LEFT: Company President Hidesaburo Kagiya scrubs the employee restrooms.

ABOVE: Royal employees sweep a busy Tokyo street.

LEFT: All office waste paper is separated at a recycling corner.

am working

to achieve a greater profit, one that transcends the account books, one that helps protect society. I don't want a company that sticks society with the bill somewhere down the road.'

stunt. At least, the announcement wasn't planned that way. Those viewers familiar with Royal must have concluded: "It's a typical Yellow Hat activity." Unexpectedly, those who never heard of Royal asked: "What is Yellow Hat?" Earning kudos and recognition despite itself, the company can't help but come up a winner, no matter how hard it tries not to be.

For all the media fanfare, Royal sticks modestly to the task of recycling resources. Even something as minor as a single order form is recycled.

The company founder is no glory-seeker or publicity hound. Hidesaburo Kagiya said bluntly, "There's nothing I dislike more than insincerity." When he first started working in Tokyo, the automotive parts industry was essentially the realm of the hype-monger.

Companies appealed to every human weakness to push their products. The worth of an employee was judged solely on his sales record, regardless of the tactics used to get the sale. The cutthroat competition galled him so much that Kagiya quit his job to go independent and named his company "Royal."

After two decades of business success, based on good relations and customer service, Kagiya did something totally eccentric for a Japanese executive. He noticed that the employees' restrooms were untidy, despite the best efforts of the janitor. He didn't want to bother the employees with a tiresome lecture or take them away from their jobs. So, in the middle of the day, he would scrub down the sinks and toilets. Employees were busy doing other work. No one said anything, and they must have thought him a bit strange.

But the sight of Kagiya performing such a menial task encouraged the employees to make their workplace more pleasant. This minor revolution started about ten years ago. The new spirit of participation began to ripple outward. Royal employees began to notice the waste and sloppiness that accompanies any business. After they delivered goods, the employees would neatly fold the cardboard boxes and return them to the office for recycling, saving their clients the mess and helping the environ-

ment. Attitudes and speaking habits also subtly changed. Most warehouse retailers try to ingratiate themselves with potential clients with a show of humility. But Royal built its reputation on the basis of its dependability. Word-of-mouth from satisfied clients was all the advertising it needed.

Understatement became Royal's unique approach to marketing which contrasts favorably with the competition's preference for the aggressive sales pitch. The company considered the tactic of selling three for the price of two as ultimately wasteful. An extra spark plug or oil filter sitting inside a glove compartment, or in a drawer, isn't going to do either the customer or the environment any good. Minimizing the consumption of unnecessary resources is essential for the environment, and it makes long-term economic sense—eventually the same customer will have to pay for that extra spark with a higher price on another item.

Kagiya is the first to admit profit and social responsibility are difficult to achieve in tandem. He explains, "True, instead of working together, these elements directly oppose each other. However, it is when we begin thinking about how to resolve these opposing goals that human knowledge is challenged and our potential increases. We do not even accept rolls of toilet paper in exchange for the paper we collect (a standard bonus offered by Japanese recyclers) from the streets every morning. We make no profits. This type of action totally opposes the corporate concept of economic

efficiency. Yet, the quality of a person or a company is judged by the degree to which it can do things that make no profit." This idea is easy to understand from a personal, human level. However, companies are usually considered to be organizations designed solely for the pursuit of profit.

"Of course, companies have to make money to stay alive. The difference lies in how this profit is being obtained. Are you creating an inconvenience for other people? Are employees growing as human beings on their jobs? Unless money is earned while fulfilling these conditions, in my mind, it is worthless."

"I wonder if companies can really survive merely through the pursuit of individual profit. On my part, I am working to achieve greater profits. In other words, a profit that transcends the profits shown in Royal's account books. The social activities carried out by Royal make an indirect contribution to protecting both society and Royal itself. I certainly do not want to have a company which sticks society with the bill somewhere down the road."

It is an understatement to say this kind of corporate philosophy goes against the grain of the get-rich-quick schemes of the "bubble" economy. "The time is soon coming when companies which have a profits-only approach will be scrutinized more closely," he asserts passionately.

"Our company is involved in a larger type of competition. Not just winning or losing against rivals. Not a competition that is immediately obvious. We want to make this a company which fulfills the long-term needs of society."

At first glance, Kagiya could be written off as a dreamy idealist, a bumbling do-gooder. Reality shows otherwise. Customers and shareholders are convinced enough to enable Royal to be capitalized at over ¥6.6 billion. And his competitors pay heed, if for no other reason than their own survival. ●



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YOSHIAKI MIURA

WOMEN AT WORK

AKIRA FUJITAKE

Professor of sociology, Gakushuin University

An astounding 68 percent of women in their early twenties are pursuing careers—equal to the number of men of the same generation on career tracks. This figure includes women still attending university or college, and thus part-time or sideline work is included in the career category by the survey.

The ratio drops among men and women between the ages of 25 and 29. Reaching full adulthood, nearly all males, some 95 percent, are on the job. Among females, only slightly less than half are working, reflecting the tendency to leave their jobs after marriage.

But women in their late thirties tend to return to the workplace and account for two-thirds of their age group. The interval period is apparently due to child rearing. The number then peaks among females in their forties—70 percent are on the job. Work, then, is a matter of course for Japanese women.

The reasons for holding a job vary among the different age groups. While many of the responses reflect the life-stage of different generations, some interesting new trends seem to be developing among young women.

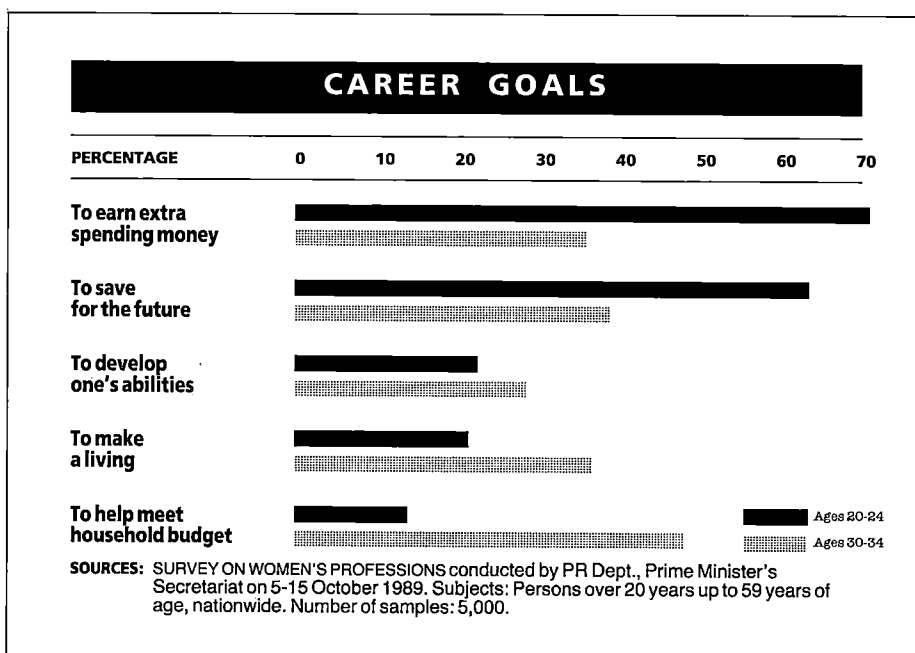
younger adults reside at their parents' homes, they can allocate more of their salaries for leisure activities.

Yet, surprisingly, young women don't seem to be spendthrift grasshoppers, living for the moment. More than their elders,

they give greater priority to "saving for the future." This answer can be interpreted in several ways, including fewer expectations for an early marriage and greater independence (possibly with the intention of purchasing a condo for one).

Asked about their work environment, 72 percent of young females responded affirmatively, about the same as males in the same age group

and far exceeding the 53 percent registered by females in their late twenties. With parity in the workforce and gradually improvements in career opportunities, women in their early twenties seem to be overcoming many of the traditional stereotypes about Japanese women.



Thirty-something women answer that "helping to meet the household budget" and "saving for the future" are their primary reasons for working. Women in their early twenties tend to be more leisure-minded, responding that "extra spending money" is their main motive. Since many



JAPAN UPDATE

定価500円(本体485円)
(会員の購読料は送料共会費に含む)