

TOKYO LETTER

tesans, traditionally clad workmen and nobles, and a performance of festival music.

There are many other local events in and around Tokyo during May. The most notable of these is the Grand Festival of Toshogu Shrine in Nikko. A procession of 1,000 persons dressed as Edo period warriors relives an event that took place more than 350 years ago, when the remains of

Ieyasu Tokugawa, founder of the Edo shogunate, were transferred to Nikko. Preceded by three portable shrines, the procession of Shinto priests and armored soldiers is reminiscent of the past glory of the Tokugawa clan.

For those inclined to quieter forms of recreation, both wisteria and azalea are in full bloom in May. The Kameido Tenjin Shrine in the

Kameido area of Tokyo is famed for its lovely ponds, arched bridges and wisteria trellises, while the Nezu Shrine and Rikugien Garden, also in the capital city, are known for their colorful and abundant azalea bushes.

Indeed, May is a merry month in Japan, too, and the abundance of fine weather at this time of year gives us all ample opportunity to enjoy it.

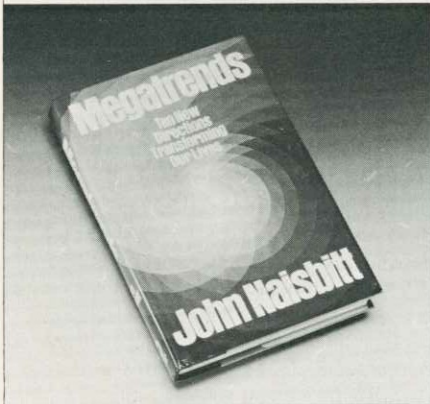
(Susan L. Scully)

BOOK REVIEW

By Chikao Tsukuda
Director
Japan Trade Center, Paris

"Megatrends"

by John Naisbitt, Warner Books,
290 pages, \$15.



When I went to New York recently on a business trip, I bought this book on the recommendation of a friend. I enjoyed it exceedingly.

Using content analysis, the author has been engaged for many years in reading changes in the undercurrents of American society. In this book, he reports his latest findings. His writing style is concrete and lively and he gives an abundance of examples to support his points. Introduced below are some of his many important observations.

From Industrial Society to Post-Industrial Society

This subject was treated long ago in a report by Japan's Industrial Structure

Council, but Naisbitt shows persuasively that post-industrial society (or information-oriented society, as it is more often called in Japan) is no longer just an abstract intellectual concept but is actually growing at a rapid rate. He also advances the unique view that the factor which will determine the success of technology in the new era is the principle of "high tech/high touch." He says that high technology makes possible high touch and that high touch is necessary for high technology.

The most outstanding example of high tech/high touch is the disco, where strobe lights flash on the ceiling and the floor is so crowded that one can hardly move (an example actually given on page 45 of the book). Another case is the simultaneous activities of robots (high tech) and a QC (quality control) circle (high touch) in a factory. The ability to maintain and operate a high tech system is as important as the ability to design the system, he contends.

From a National Economy to a World Economy

Some might say that this, too, is self-evident. But the important point is that the American people have actually begun to think this way.

Other points he makes in this section include:

— The situation with *Japan As No. 1* is not dissimilar to a new world champion emerging in a declining sport.

— The United States has already gone beyond an industrial society, and it is too late now for it to regain supremacy in industrial fields.

— Redistribution of labor and production on a global scale is unavoidable. Every industrial field will see an international change in players.

— The new global model = production sharing. A global economy requires global investment.

From Short-term to Long-term

What he says here is:

— Strategic planning has no value without strategic vision.

— The United States is swarming with cities, companies, trade unions and political parties, which are like dinosaurs waiting patiently for the weather to improve. The weather will not improve. Nor are they aware that the ground under their feet has begun to move. What they most need to do is reconstruct the concepts behind their respective roles.

The other important trends Naisbitt notes are:

— From centralization to decentralization. Renovation should come from the bottom up.

— Representative democracy declines in a society where information is transmitted instantly. Participatory democracy is necessary.

— From hierarchical structure to information networks.

— U.S. population movement to the southwest. Emergence of three megastates (California, Florida and Texas).

— From limited this-or-that options to pluralistic options. Professional and lifestyle diversity.

Megatrends is an extremely interesting book. I recommend it to anyone involved in one way or another with the United States.

The Japanese edition, translated by Kenichi Takemura, is now available from bookstores throughout Japan. It was published by Mikasa Shobo this March (259 pages; ¥980).