

Must-see sites

The most famous place in Shimoda is Gyokusenji Temple, which served as a residence for Townsend Harris, the first American diplomatic representative to Japan. Harris lived there with his Dutch interpreter, Henry Heusken, from August 1856 to March 1858. Fortunately the temple still stands much as it did when Harris was living there, and you can see the rooms that Harris and Heusken lived in as well as a few mementos of their residence. (I used to live in Ito, a town on the Izu Peninsula that holds a festival every summer in honor of William Adams, the Englishman who lived in Japan in the 1600s and became a friend of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Adams was the model for Blackthorne in the novel *Shogun*, but unfortunately he left nothing behind that you can see.)

Harris, like *gaijin* nowadays, could not live completely in Japanese style. He had to have his "Philadelphia stove" and Western furniture, he had to eat meat and drink milk, and he may even have worn shoes in the house—but in return for these privileges he did give English lessons to local officials and in so doing became the first in a long line of "English conversation teachers." It is interesting to see where this cantankerous but skillful diplomat lived; maybe he didn't look like John Wayne in *The Barbarian and the Geisha*, but he did a good job of representing his country and he even got along well with the Russians when they visited Shimoda. On a terrace to the left of the temple, you can see the gravestones of three Russian sailors who lost their lives in a tidal wave at Shimoda; and to the right, the gravestones of three members of Perry's fleet.

Another famous place is Ryosenji Temple, where Commodore Perry and representatives of the Tokugawa government arranged a supplementary treaty in 1854, after the conclusion of the Kanagawa Treaty. What the official *Japan Guide* does not mention is that Ryosenji is also famous, among the Japanese, for its collection of erotic statuary, phallic symbols and the like. My wife's father made sure to guide us there in 1968: I guess he considered it part of our education. Somehow this collection impressed me as a healthy and natural phenomenon, especially when compared with the stuff in the peep magazines prevalent nowadays.

There is also a series of pictures hung inside Ryosenji Temple depicting the story of Okichi, the so-called mistress of Townsend Harris. There was an Okichi and she did serve as a maid for Harris—for three days! Apparently the old bachelor, unlike his young Dutch assistant, did not crave female companionship at that time, and he barely tolerated the girl who had been sent to work for him (and spy on him). Okichi was 17 when she first went to Gyokusenji Temple; she later left Shimoda and worked in the entertainment quarters at a port for foreigners on Edo Bay. She returned to Shimoda when she was nearly 50 and ended up an alcoholic and a suicide. Thus a national legend was born: the Japanese girl who sacri-

ficed herself for her country by becoming the mistress of a foreigner. Heusken's girlfriend Ofuku, by contrast, later made a good marriage and spent a happy life in the village of Kakisaki, near Shimoda.

There are many other places to see and things to do in Shimoda. You can take an excursion boat out to the Seven Islands of Izu. In summer you can go swimming and surfing at one of the beautiful beaches such as Yumigahama or Shirahama (in Newport when we say "beach," that's what we mean, a place with nice white sand). What I like to do is walk and Shimoda is just the place for that: you can walk around the town or go down to the docks and walk along the shore on one of the special hiking paths. You might even see an old house with *namako-kabe*, the traditional black tile and white plaster walls that were used in Shimoda even in the days when Perry came to Japan.

And by all means, take a trip out to Cape Iro, by bus or by boat. Stand above the cliffs, stretch your arms and look out at the Pacific from the very end of the peninsula—it's a good antidote for that feeling of confinement that sometimes comes over us in this crowded land.

Some places in Japan are disappointing; I know of one famous resort that is considered the "favorite summer hideaway for foreign residents of Japan." Sounds like a kind of bucolic Roppongi, doesn't it? But when I went there, all I could see was miles and miles of "tennis assembly lines," some artsy-craftsy shops and high-priced boutiques and a church whose pastor offers to perform "weddings to order, in Japanese, English or Gregorian Latin."

With Shimoda, however, what you see is what you get: It's a small town at the tip of the Izu Peninsula, where the scenery is pretty and the people are friendly, and it's a nice place to walk around.

John Dring

Lecturer in English
International College of Tourism, Atami

Bookshelf

***Kaizen*—The Key to Japanese Competitive Success**

By Masaaki Imai
Published by Random House, Inc.
1986, New York
259 pages; \$19.95

Kaizen is a combination of two *kanji*. *Kai* can mean "change," "innovate," "rectify," "re-cant," "reform" or "improve." *Zen* means "goodness." The Japanese/English dictionary gives the combination as "improvement" but

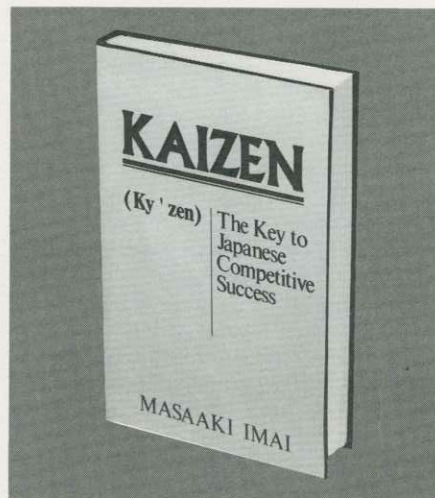
the reader is in for a surprise if he thinks that is all that it means.

The author states right at the beginning that "*Kaizen* strategy is the single most important concept in Japanese management." We've had Ouchi's *Theory Z* and Pascale/Athos' *Seven S's*, but their propositions were multifaceted. This immediately raised the question in me: "Surely, Japanese success is the result of a convergence of cultural, historic, economic and other forces and not of a single concept?" However, I soon realized that the author is not really referring to a "concept" in the Western sense, for his *kaizen* is procedural and relative to many factors. The suspicion that this is just another pat formula for success is not warranted.

Kaizen is process rather than result oriented and reminds me of Sophia University's Ballon's observation that when Japanese managers get together, there seem to be no decisions but only executions. I am of the generation that cut its teeth on Drucker's *Managing for Results* and to replace "result" with "process" is revolutionary. In my occupation, this is analogous to an American advertising executive being told by his Japanese counterpart that communication measurements don't mean very much.

The book is bound to raise defensive reactions in the West. Not only are we challenged on our results orientation but the author asserts that "innovation strategies of the past will not work." In other words, *kaizen* is not "innovation." The author is scornful of the various management jargon of the past but is in danger of creating one himself unless this distinction is clearly explained. Imai's enthusiasm is infectious and his excitement comes through the pages but some readers, more accustomed to the dispassionate styles of Drucker and even Peters/Waterman may be turned off. For example, he makes the sweeping claim that *kaizen* is not culturally based and that it is transferable to all, suggesting the discovery of the universal management value.

The author agrees with Peters and Waterman that excellent companies are not limited to any culture and certainly this is universality



of sorts. However, *kaizen* seems to be based on Japanese cultural values and not quite as easy to transfer elsewhere as Imai implies. Managers are involved in managing change and it is pointed out that Western management tends toward abrupt change while the Japanese prefer the gradual. This is a very fundamental difference that is surely culture based. Also *kaizen* means ongoing rather than one-shot improvement. Since it is procedure oriented, it tends to work better in Japan than in the West because of the collaborative approach to cross-functional problems compared with the West's conflict-resolution approach. Alas, we have all witnessed Western business meetings in which division heads are too busy scoring points to look beyond the walls. Remedying this involves changing cultural attitudes.

At first there seems little that is new in the elements under the *kaizen* umbrella. Familiar terms such as "customer orientation" and "TOC" crop up; even "*kamban*," the possible exception, will be familiar to students of Toyota. Perhaps because of his background, the author shows a strong bias toward production management in his illustrations, although he does point out that the principles are applicable to service managements too. Still, despite his proclamation that Japanese business is customer oriented, as a consumer marketer coping with years of "distribution push" over "consumer pull," I had the strange feeling that I was still in the 60s when technology ruled paramount, but this is just quibbling.

It is to the author's credit that he has focused on "simple" truths in a way that not only do they become suddenly relevant but are seen from new perspectives. Imai takes great pains to illustrate his points and he cannot be accused of leaving the reader up in the air, but the trade-off is that the book in parts is repetitious and some points are belabored. However, one can skip and still get the benefit of his arguments that are clearly presented with brilliant use of diagrams. One chapter that should not be skipped is where he sets out practical guidance on *kaizen* management.

Some questions remain. *Kaizen* is an important tool for established business but will it also contribute to breakthroughs? Isn't process orientation just another way of saying that the Japanese are geniuses at adaptation? Where does the original impetus come from for *kaizen*? Japanese businesses have achieved preeminence in many fields and that many can *maintain* this status is unquestioned. However, historically this preeminence has only recently been achieved, based on external input, and its longevity is still a matter of debate. After all, who could have imagined, 20 years ago, the demise of the mighty dollar, or 50 years ago, the eclipse of the British Empire, or the rise of Japan to its current economic eminence, if it comes to that?

The author's career itself shows the transitory nature of business glory. Back in the 50s he worked with the Japan Productivity Center in Washington, shepherding Japanese businessmen in learning the secrets of American productivity. That attitude in itself was the se-

cret of Japan's success and is the genesis of Imai's concept of *kaizen*. His book is an indictment of Western complacency—while the Japanese learned from the West and continued to improve, complacent Western management just stood still.

One test for a book is whether it is relevant to one's environment and *Kaizen* passes. Soon after reading it, I become conscious of *kaizen's* ubiquity. There in the morning paper was an article on Nihon Kokan's struggles to establish Japanese-style industrial relations in the United States. "The *kaizen* has only just started," the paper said. Then in the evening paper, a columnist was objecting to the stridency of an acclaimed film. However, he acknowledged that in some Kurosawa classics, the star Mifune was at times inaudible. "With the advances in recording technology," he said, "there has been *kaizen* on that point."

The word "improvement" in my English papers of the day appeared only in the context of crisis or conflict situations. The point is that in the West, "improvement" is something that needs to be done while in Japan it appears as a natural consequence of all actions. I realize now that *kaizen* is not synonymous with improvement.

The ultimate test for a book of this kind is whether it forces the reader to reexamine his role. Well, *Kaizen* did just that for me and I even felt depressed after reading it, at my managerial inadequacy! I know that I will be quoting freely from this book, probably at times unconsciously. Also I will be going back to it, as it was beyond my capabilities to absorb its rich detail in one sitting.

George Fields

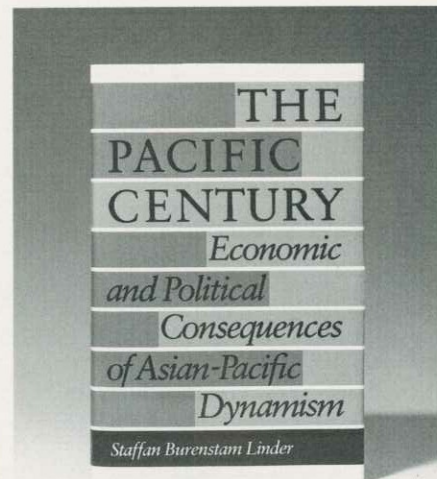
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
ASI Market Research-Japan

The Pacific Century: Economic and Political Consequences of Asian-Pacific Dynamism

By Staffan Burenstam Linder
Published by Stanford University Press
1986, Stanford
154 pages; \$18.95/\$7.95 (pbk.)

An analysis of the changes that are transforming the Asian-Pacific region, this work by one of Europe's leading economists is directed primarily at people outside the region, particularly Europeans. The past two decades have seen phenomenal economic growth and industrialization in the western Pacific countries of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the ASEAN countries. The dynamic flow of goods and capital to, from and among these countries is widely recognized as the most vigorous in the world, and the Asian-Pacific region is routinely said to have the best growth potential of anywhere in the world.

Still, growth and expanded trade are by no means easy for the Asian-Pacific countries.



Japan's economic growth slowed drastically in the wake of the first oil crisis, and the recessions of the early 1980s have put the brakes on the rapid growth the Asian newly industrializing countries (NICs) and ASEAN countries enjoyed throughout the 1970s. In addition to the continuing Japan-U.S. trade friction, the Asian NICs and the ASEAN countries have also been having trouble in their trade relations with the United States since last year.

This trade friction has been caused by the very dynamism that has powered the region's rapid growth and generated major changes in Asian-Pacific patterns of trade in food, raw materials and energy as well as development investment patterns. Increasing international interdependence with uneven growth rates has made trade friction inevitable in many sectors.

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC), founded in 1980 in response to then Japanese Prime Minister Ohira's Pacific Community Proposal, has established task forces on trade in minerals and energy, direct investment and technology transfer and other areas to look for ways of minimizing friction and sustaining and promoting interdependent development and growth. Unlike the business-oriented Pacific Basin Economic Council or the Pacific Trade and Development Conference of economists, PECC has a tripartite structure with representation from government, business and academia. While the PECC cannot replace direct governmental negotiations, it does provide a forum for the kind of exchange of views that is so indispensable to smooth negotiations and interaction among the Asian-Pacific countries. The regular members of the PECC are the industrialized countries of Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and the newly industrializing countries of Korea and the ASEAN group.

Europe is showing a keen interest in this activity in the Asian-Pacific region, and Europeans are reacting in two ways. One reaction is positive, an effort to win a place for Europe in the Asian-Pacific region's rapid trade and investment growth. Within the past few years, I

have been visited by several German and Swedish economists, all of whom were on their way to or from Southeast Asia in search of ways Europe could participate in the region's growth. The other reaction, of course, is a negative one motivated by the fear that Europe may be left behind as the rapidly growing Asian-Pacific region surges ahead.

Both of these attitudes were clearly evident at the London Conference on the Future of the Asia-Pacific Region held last October under the joint auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, University of London, and Japan's National Institute for Research Advancement. The Japanese delegation stressed that European corporations are already participating in Asian-Pacific development and that the PECC welcomes European involvement. Still, it was painfully obvious that greater efforts must be made to publicize the Asian-Pacific region's openness to European participation.

Linder is especially well qualified for this role. Since 1961 when he first postulated his economic theory explaining trade expansion among countries with similar per capita incomes, Linder has been a source of much original thinking on such issues as North-South trade and development assistance. Twice Sweden's Minister of Trade, Linder has a broad perspective on the European economies in the global context.

In the first chapter of his book, Linder shows how the focal point of the world economy is definitely shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and he then goes on to outline three effects this shift will have.

First, he says that the Asian-Pacific success story has a powerful demonstration effect, providing valuable lessons in outward-oriented market-economy strategies for the developing countries. In the 1950s, the developing countries looked to China and the Soviet Union, but today the roles have been reversed, and China, at least, is looking to the Asian-Pacific countries for its growth strategies.

Second, the development of the Asian-Pacific region is opening up new markets and resource supplies and stimulating technology and capital transfers, both intra- and extra-regional. Above all, Asian-Pacific growth has introduced a new competitive element into the world economy that is promoting revitalization on a worldwide scale.

Third, he notes that Asian-Pacific growth is likely to be perceived as a threat in Europe in sectors where the two regions compete head-on, and there is real danger that the region's very success could provoke negative protectionist trends. Linder urges that the people of Europe respond vigorously to the Asian-Pacific challenge and work hard to turn Asian-Pacific dynamism to their own advantage. In all of this, he lives up to expectations.

There are, however, some points on which I feel Linder falls short. For example, his analysis is limited to the macroeconomic realm and does not deal directly with the specific elements of Asian-Pacific dynamism. It would have been helpful had he looked at the role played by Japanese and American multinational corporations. European multinationals are also involved in the region, and many companies in the Asian NICs have recently taken on a multinational flavor.

Also disappointing is the fact that Linder restricted himself to the period leading up to the 1980s and does not address the many issues that have since emerged.

Finally, a more detailed explanation of the PECC and its functioning would have been helpful in presenting a clearer picture of how Europe can participate in and benefit from the Asian-Pacific region's dynamic growth.

Linder presents a very impressive bibliography, but few of the texts listed are actually Asian-Pacific publications. For readers wanting in-depth background and current information on the Asian-Pacific region, I would recommend PECC publications and this journal.

Ippeei Yamazawa

Professor

Hitotsubashi University

Taste of Tokyo

Los Platos

The first restaurant in Tokyo serving Spanish cuisine opened in 1964, the year of the Tokyo Olympics. It failed to win over the Japanese, and the young Spanish chef returned to his homeland with his dream unfulfilled. That dream, however, has since been inherited by Toshiaki Takahashi, the chef of Los Platos. Takahashi went to Spain in 1970 and toured the country, sampling the dishes of different regions. In 1974, he moved his restaurant from Shibuya to Akasaka, and devoted himself to creating a shop where customers could enjoy fine eating in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. This spirit pervades every corner of Los Platos.

Start by toasting each other's health with a dry sherry. Smack your lips over the restaurant's own *Jamón serrano* ham (¥1,700) and *Chorizo* (¥800). *Jamón serrano*, originating in the foothills of the Pyrenees, is ham of such rare quality that in Spain people say they will steal to eat it. Los Platos makes it at the foot of the Yatsugatake mountains, and gourmards say it equals the original. *Chorizo* sausages are concocted with paprika and garlic—indescribably delicious.

Wine is poured to the brim of a porcelain

taza, a vessel used in the Galicia district for drinking the local wine. It is a far cry from the sophisticated wine glass, but there is nothing better for exchanging cheerful, carefree drinks.

For *tapas* to go with wine, there are famous dishes from around Spain. There are *Champiñones a la segoviana* (¥1,200), *Esquixada* (¥1,200), an hors d'œuvre salad of dried codfish, a specialty of Catalonia, and *Callos a la madrileña* (¥1,500), stewed beef intestine à la Madrid. The Basque region, bordering on France, is known for sauce dishes like *Sepia en su tinta* (¥1,500) or ink-stewed squid. Also delightful is *Pulpo picante* (¥1,200), a Takahashi original of octopus with mustard banana sauce based on a Galician dish. And finally, the steaming rice dish *Paella Los Platos* (¥3,000 for two). *Paella* means iron frying pan in Spanish. Rice with a mix of ingredients, if cooked in a clay pan, is called *arroz*.

Spain boasts an enormous diversity of local dishes. There are more than 100 items on the

menu at Los Platos, which itself means "many dishes." But that is not the only reason for the name. All kinds of plates, large and small, rival the murals of bullfighting scenes in a setting reminiscent of the Middle Ages—one cannot but admire the sense that has gone into creating the restaurant's remarkable atmosphere.

As the evening continues, the restaurant fills with laughter, the clinking of plates and flamenco music. One can readily understand why one visiting Spanish journalist called Los Platos "Spain in Japan." The restaurant often caters receptions for the Spanish Embassy. Los Platos has seats for 80 guests. There is also a counter for single customers. Reservations are recommended.

Address: Terrace Akasaka, 1st Floor
13-11, Akasaka 6-chome, Minato-ku
Tel: (03) 583-4262

Open: daily, 11:30 a.m.–10:30 p.m.

(Yoshimichi Hori, editor-in-chief)

