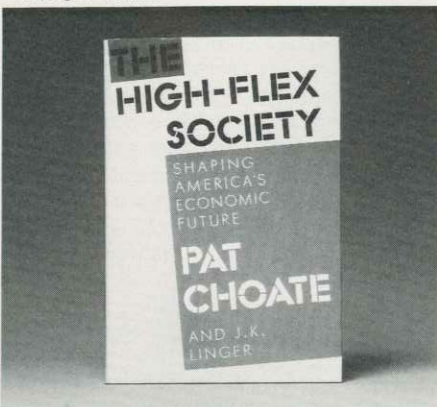


Bookshelf

The High-Flex Society: Shaping America's Economic Future

By Pat Choate and J.K. Linger
Published by Alfred A. Knopf
1986, New York
301 pages; \$18.95



The structural shift currently taking place as the industrial countries move from manufacturing to service economies is a clear indication of the maturing of their free-market economies. The United States economy is perhaps the prototype here, and it is its very success over the past half century that has engendered this shift. In a way, the American economy is a victim of its own success, nowhere more obviously than in the extremely high wages paid American workers.

The High-Flex Society is a businessman's prescription for the revitalization of the American economy, proffered by two people with a deep love for their country. The key word is flexibility, and the authors warn that the society that loses its capacity to adapt is doomed to decline. Dividing their work into sections on trade, business, government and workers, the authors urge greater flexibility in all of these four areas.

In their proposal for a high-flex trade strategy, the authors very practically suggest that American markets should only be as open as those of its trading partners. If necessary, American markets could even be temporarily closed, they argue, although I suspect such a strategy provides a dangerous pretext for protectionism. I also feel that their working division of the world's economies into five types—centrally planned economies (such as the Soviet Union), mixed economies (France), developing economies (Brazil), plan-driven market economies (Japan) and rule-driven market economies (the United States)—is, while interesting as an academic exercise, too simplistic to be useful.

In their section on high-flex business, the authors stress that manufacturing and ser-

vices are mutually supportive, explain the important role that small business plays in the economy and criticize American management for being self-destructively myopic in many cases. They also say that the revitalization of American industry demands the kind of productive cooperation between labor and management being introduced into the United States by such Japanese companies as Nissan, Honda and Matsushita. There is no question that improved labor relations would contribute significantly to a more vigorous American economy. This particular section is well written and convincing.

The American government is plagued, say the authors in their section on the high-flex government, by disorderly policy-making processes resulting in inconsistent policies, poor management practices and the pernicious influence of powerful single-interest groups. In a radical approach (radical in the American context), the authors denounce the adversarial relationship that has traditionally prevailed between government and business and suggest the appointment of a national competitiveness adviser to the President who would function much like the National Security Adviser.

The authors' prescription for fostering high-flex workers is quite unsparing in some areas, but the best medicine is often bitter, and many of their proposals offer realistic solutions to the problems confronting American workers today.

Struggling with a soaring yen and the need to stimulate domestic consumption, Japan can learn much from this book. I was disappointed to find, however, that the authors' statements concerning Japan were frequently based on grave misunderstandings. For example, in recounting the July 1985 visit of a delegation of the Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition, the authors tell how one of the delegates was rebuffed when she asked why Japanese automakers would not buy American spark plugs. "Perhaps," the authors speculate, "they were unwilling to use the plugs because Japanese law makes it illegal for a citizen to have a foreign spark plug in his car." This is nonsense, and more careful research would have helped them to avoid this and the other blatant mistakes that mar their work.

I believe the United States economy can and will get back on its feet. The appearance of this kind of book, President Reagan's January State of the Union Address and the many proposals for competitiveness enhancement now before Congress all suggest that there is healthy debate on the subject and a determination to move in the right direction.

This is not to say that the American economy has been on the wrong track up to now. Quite the contrary. America's vast capital resources and industry have made major contributions to the economic and political development and stability of the Western democracies. The authors are to be commended for looking ahead to the 21st century. Personally, I hope that by the next century political boundaries would no longer be the

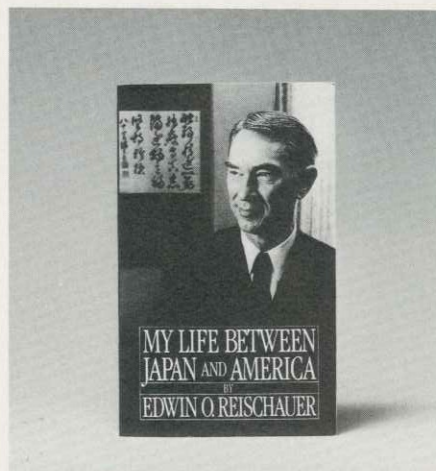
barriers they are today to economic activity. Both American and Japanese industries are rapidly internationalizing, and for the new breed of corporation the whole world is a single high-flex market.

Tatsuo Masuda
Director

Overseas Public Affairs Office
International Trade Policy Bureau
Ministry of International Trade and Industry

My Life between Japan and America

By Edwin O. Reischauer
Published by Harper & Row, Inc.
1986, New York
367 pages; \$22.50
(Far East reprint edition published by John
Weatherhill, Inc., Tokyo; pbk.; ¥1,500)



Scholar and teacher of Asian history; former U.S. ambassador in Tokyo; television commentator; author of academic and popular books on Japan: to many Americans and Japanese alike, Edwin O. Reischauer has come to symbolize the best in the relations between their two countries. In this engaging memoir, Reischauer tells why and how he came to serve as a bridge between two cultures. Along the way, he gives his readers fascinating glimpses into a Japan long gone, as well as illuminating portraits of the people who made—and make—headlines in postwar politics and diplomacy across the Pacific.

Born in 1910 in Tokyo, of American missionary parents, Reischauer lived in Japan for most of the first two decades of his life, and for extended periods thereafter, first as a Japan scholar and then as the U.S. ambassador to Japan. A pioneer in East Asian studies, he introduced several generations of American students to Chinese, Korean and Japanese culture and language, directly in his classroom at Harvard and indirectly through his well-written and inviting books. Appointed ambassador to Japan by President Kennedy in 1961, he spent five years in Tokyo pursuing in a highly public way his lifelong goal of reducing tensions and building bridges between his two countries.

Reischauer's ties to Japan run the gamut from professional to personal: his second wife is Haru Matsukata, the descendant of a Meiji statesman on her father's side and a pioneer of Japan-U.S. trade on her mother's. His friends and acquaintances include educational, political and cultural leaders on both sides of the Pacific.

Many leading figures in academic and political circles make cameo appearances in these pages; Reischauer's pen-portraits can be sharp. Kennedy adviser and Harvard dean McGeorge Bundy is described as "a sort of diamond of a man—as hard as he was brilliant." John Kenneth Galbraith, economist and former ambassador to India, is "delightfully amusing in his well-phrased arrogance." We see Lyndon Johnson in Washington planting Stetson hats on the heads of visiting Japanese dignitaries—to the acute embarrassment of also-visiting Ambassador Reischauer—and General Douglas MacArthur holding court at the palatial U.S. Embassy residence in Tokyo.

Although he is more restrained in his portraits of Japanese politicians, Reischauer shrewdly assesses the strengths and weaknesses of parliamentary leaders and prime ministers from Ikeda to Nakasone—all of whom he knew and worked with.

He can also be disarmingly frank and witty about his own work and character. With dry self-deprecation he describes his generation

of Japan scholars—those who began their academic careers before World War II—as "elder statesmen," curiosities, or dinosaurs, depending on one's point of view." Of his ambassadorial years, he remarks that he often felt as though he had been miscast in an operatic performance but managed to muddle his way through: "I was told to sing, and lo, when I opened my mouth my voice bellowed forth, apparently to the satisfaction of the audience."

Reischauer's style is graceful and lucid, often eloquent but more often conversational. Whether the subject is growing up in Japan, learning and teaching history in Europe and New England, or the busy years of the ambassadorship, the reader has the sensation of strolling across a tree-shaded campus with the professor, listening to him reminisce about the events in his life and being introduced to the people who influenced him. We can almost see the schoolboy riding the streetcars in Tokyo, the isolated and lonely student in 1930s Paris, the young professor raising three children after his wife's death, the ambassador being stabbed in front of the embassy in 1964.

Political and diplomatic problems in Japan-U.S. relations are always in the background. Reischauer's views of U.S. foreign policies and public attitudes range from regret at American complacency and ethnocentrism to scathing denunciation of McCarthyist persecution of scholars and diplomats. On the Japanese

side, he criticizes the Tokyo government's disingenuous handling of the public's questions about U.S. ships entering Japanese ports with nuclear warheads aboard.

Tensions in Japan-U.S. relations were at their postwar peak at the beginning of the 1960s, when Reischauer went to Tokyo as U.S. envoy. With his background and his popularity in Japan, he was in an ideal position to mediate, temporize and harmonize. He describes the gap in perception between Japanese and Americans that faced him as he began his ambassadorship: Japanese felt resentful in their economic dependence on the U.S. and at the mercy of what they saw as a reckless foreign policy in Asia; Americans took Japan for granted and were often callous toward Japanese sensibilities. Reischauer saw the two countries, he says, as "two giant icebergs grinding against each other, while I, armed with a frail bamboo pole, tried to steer them away from this abrasive contact."

He succeeded then; his example, and his optimism about the possibilities for friendship between two countries as different as Japan and the U.S., give hope today, at a time when tensions are again rising between the two nations.

Susan Schmidt

Editor

University of Tokyo Press

Taste of Tokyo

Brasserie Bernard Ginza

The French restaurant located on the 7th floor of the Printemps Department Store near the Japan Railways' Yurakucho station in the center of Tokyo has rapidly become famous among connoisseurs of good food. The secret behind its fame is Chef A. Bernard, the grand chef for the dinner party hosted by French President Mitterrand when he visited Japan in 1982. Bernard is also frequently the chef for dinners given by Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko in the Togu Palace and parties hosted by foreign embassies in Tokyo.

Chef Bernard was born in Normandy, and began learning the rudiments of cooking when he was only eight years old. His first teacher was his mother, who ran her own restaurant. He formally entered the chef's profession when he was 14. For the past 12 years he has been in Japan, and is without dispute the foremost French chef in Tokyo.

Brasserie Bernard Ginza's menu is rich in its variety of French cuisine, including provincial dishes. Chef Bernard's forte is meat dishes, from rabbit, lamb and beef to duck. One can

usually start drawing conclusions on the quality of a French restaurant by sampling its bread and *escargot*. Brasserie Bernard's bread and *escargot*, called snails *Bourguignon* style (¥1,400), are the equal of the best in Tokyo. Thus, the food is more than satisfactory, while the reasonable prices allow one to dine at ease. The two-year-old house wine is quite enjoyable as well.

Chef Bernard's recommendations are: Pickled salmon with *aneth* (¥1,500), Assorted pâté and sausages (¥1,600), Scallops Pro-

vence style (¥2,200), Stuffed sole with American sauce (¥2,200), Beef ragout in red wine sauce with fresh noodles (¥2,500) and Bavette steak grilled or with pepper sauce (¥2,800).

Address: 7th Floor of Printemps Dept. Store, 3-2-1, Ginza, Chuo-ku

Tel: (03) 564-4239

Business hours: 10:30 a.m.–9:30 p.m.

Closed Thursdays

(Yoshimichi Hori, editor-in-chief)

