

Regrettably, the burden for this falls squarely on the Japanese. Japan's centuries of isolation created a unique sense of separation, as a culture and as a people. This separation is no longer necessarily antagonistic, as it often was during the Tokugawa Shogunate, the early years of the Meiji Restoration and the imperialistic expansion of the 20th century, but passive. One small example of this reinforced separation concerns the use of the word *gaijin*, a neutral word for foreigner. Unlike "gringo," "spick" or "dago," the word *gaijin* does not usually have direct negative connotations. Nonetheless, it is used to denote something different. As a confirmed jogger, I frequently pass very small children (two or three years old) who point at me and say *gaijin*. Even at a very early age, Japanese are taught to identify some people as distinctly different. A recent Wall Street Journal article quoted Cathleen Parks, a *gaijin* resident in Japan, as saying, "I often see Japanese parents teaching their children to point and say *gaijin* (foreigner) in the same way that they teach them to point and say 'panda' or 'monkey' at the zoo." This is not to say *gaijins*, or pandas for that matter, are disrespected, but the difference between Japanese and non-Japanese is stressed.

Much more difficult to resolve for good international relations is the communications gap which exists between Japanese and Westerners. The close confidences, relationships and understandings that often develop among Japanese are very difficult between Japanese and foreigners. Ironically, the much ballyhooed cultural differences between East and West are rarely to blame for the lack of developing intimacy. Most foreigners, and most Japanese who travel overseas, make serious at-

tempts to understand, or at least tolerate the differences in diet, dress, religion, national cultural traits and life style. Friendships often develop but rarely do they go beyond the superficial level despite frequent desires on both sides for greater intimacy. Language presents the greatest barrier, for through language Westerners are crudely blunt and Japanese inscrutable.

Few Westerners who are not seriously involved with Japan (i.e. residing there) bother to learn Japanese. For the tourist or businessman enough English is understood in the cities to get along, or translators are readily available. Even the foreigner who is serious about learning Japanese is perplexed by the high degree of fluency required before intimate relationships can be formed. The levels of politeness, the *wa* and *ga*, the subtle shading of meaning possible through the careful selection of words make the kind of conversation necessary for firm friendships difficult. Foreigners who have resided for long periods of time in Japan frequently express frustration at being unable to voice their opinions correctly. The more they learn, the more subtle differences stand out, and ironically the more unintentional damage they are capable of doing for they are expected to know better.

As Japan increases its international contact, more foreigners will undoubtedly learn Japanese. Presently in the United States and England, however, where educational budget cutbacks are rampant, foreign language programs have a low priority. The successful ones are often funded by the Japanese. Thus, for the time being, effective communication between peoples rests with the Japanese. Japan has recognized this fact. Virtually every Japanese student has six years of English instruction in school. The better

students excel on the English portions of university entrance examinations. They can read, construct sentences, and spell more accurately than most native speakers, and linguistic approaches to English are excellent. Still, these same students do not necessarily speak or comprehend English effectively. Serious thought needs to be given to revising the curriculum for practical application.

Finally, despite desires to make contributions to international understanding, the lack of clearly defined goals, and leadership, increasingly limits Japan's chances of success. By failing to integrate economic achievement into a broader conceptual framework, Japan ties herself to the well worn path of economic necessity. Japanese successes in business will be envied, imitated. However the unique opportunity to present something more is slipping away.

Since the war, talented Japanese have gravitated toward the field of business and achievements there have been significant. Can talented Japanese of the present channel their energies to providing a viable ideology for the modern world—one also worth imitating? The lack of a clearly defined Japanese ideology is disappointing not so much for what is, but for what might have been. ●

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Quest for Principles and Love

— A Reflection on Eight Years in America —

By Kiichi Mochizuki

I have spent the past eight years in the United States—three years as a fellow at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard and five years as a representative of a Japanese corporation in Houston. This period, 1974-1982, saw a drastic change in the American political economy: a change more disillusioning than the end of the

Vietnam War, or the forced termination of the gold conversion system. The successive oil crises since 1973 have created two major underlying trends in the world: (1) chronic recession caused by excessive energy prices; and (2) a superfluous supply of petrodollars mostly uncontrollable. Thus, the expectation of inflation

has led to high interest rates—independent of classical theories—and the worldwide recession has become chronic. Meanwhile, the energy industry reaped abnormally high profits, until they cased off in 1982 due to the spread of the general recession. During this time, the U.S. economy underwent structural changes: the decline

of the manufacturing industry, which consumes a large amount of energy and raw materials; the survival of energy-efficient industries; and the growth of energy and energy-related industries.

Together with this change, it seems that a profound regression in the social fabric of the American system is taking place. Very high crime rates in most urban areas are one obvious example. As a result, law enforcement officers are finding it increasingly difficult to cope, and a growing number of Americans have sought to ease their fears through multiple locks, costly alarm systems and the possession of guns. Another backward step is the present lack of a guiding political philosophy or a set of principles. In recent years, politicians have too often become the instrument of narrowly defined pressure groups and political representation has become so institutionalized, that the unorganized and uninformed silent majority has no

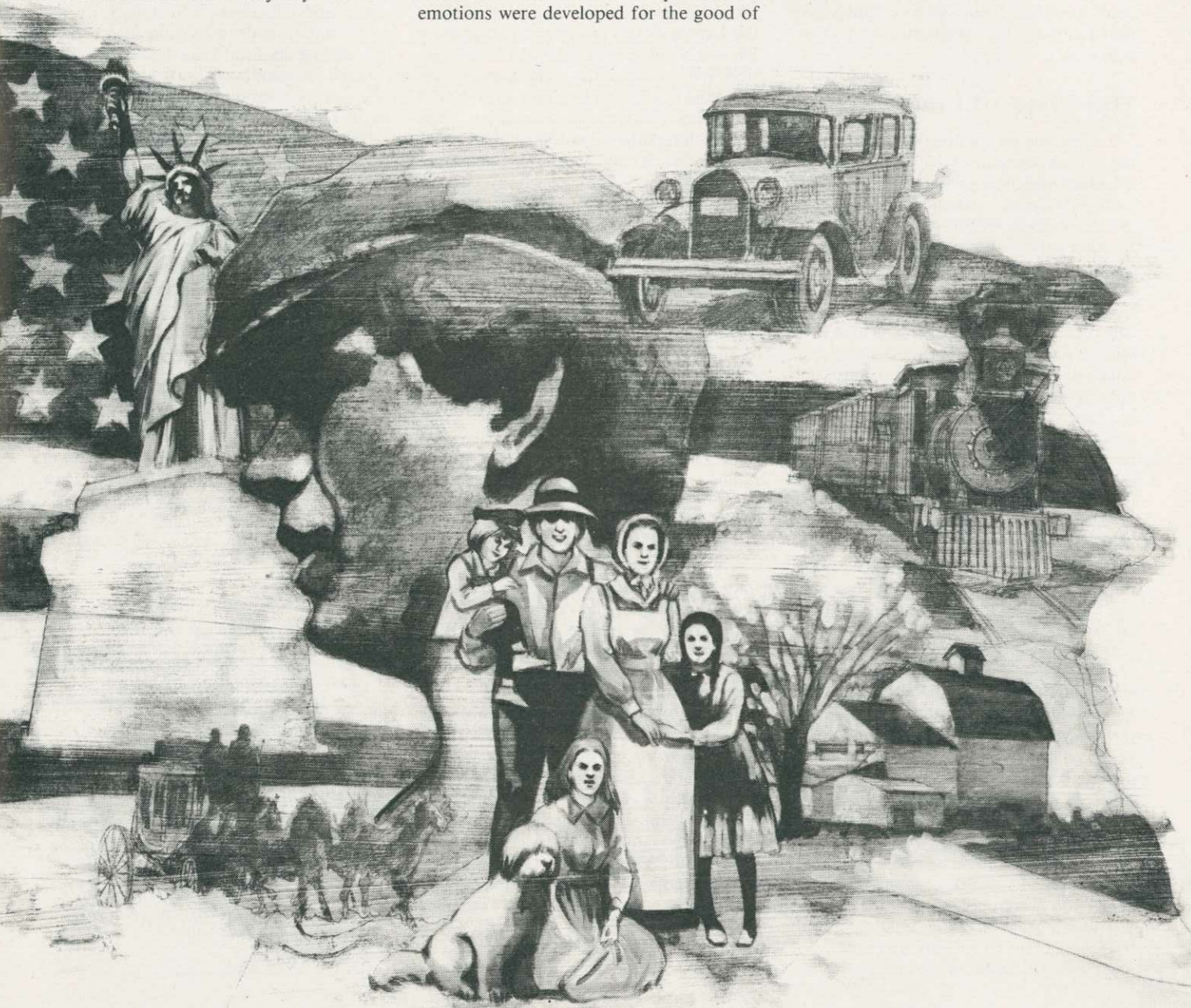
means by which to express itself. Constructive individualism appears to have given way to narrow egotism; self-assertiveness has turned into self-defensiveness; and honest self-interest has become a total lack of consideration for others. Thus, citizens only perform their very narrowly defined responsibilities in their workplace, ignoring the effects of this lack of social cohesion. Manufacturing productivity has suffered most from this phenomenon. The general deterioration of U.S. manufacturing industries parallels this social regression.

Inadequate Ethical Principles

Why was the American system viable and effective in the past? American civilization came as far as it did because of the emphasis on a strong ego and a self-assertiveness in which individual capacities and emotions were developed for the good of

the entire society. Although this freedom of the individual to assert himself has been stressed as a general virtue of the society, what has been overlooked in recent years is that there were always collective and coordinating forces behind these individuals, to maintain the integrity of the society. These forces can be understood as principles and love in a religious sense. Such principles as fundamental human rights, the free enterprise system and love and consideration for others, guided in a positive way the accumulation of individual energy, which could be either noble or harmful.

The problem now is that such principles and love have become somewhat inadequate, as society and the system have become more complex. Basic human rights are difficult to maintain when it means advancement of other ethnic groups at the expense of your own group. Love and consideration for others (when



'others' might speak a different language and be of a different cultural background) is difficult to realize, beyond an occasional donation. Likewise, the free trading system is faltering in the face of international competition. Against such a background, principles and love have come to lose their previous guiding force. Some hide behind a facade of euphemisms; others desperately search for alternatives; and many seem caught up in the naked pursuit of self-interest. The principle of human rights has been tarnished by real set-backs in both the international arena and domestically. The free market system has been modified in order to rescue obsolescent industries, not only in international trade, but also in domestic operations. The American inclination in international relations, in the absence of viable principles, appears to represent special political and bureaucratic interests at the expense of larger interests, and it tends to seek in exotic systems scapegoats, thus reducing the effectiveness of its foreign policy.

The Loss of Love

Love in the profound sense is also missing in contemporary America. Love must be something through which to communicate with other humans of the same group, humans of other groups, peoples of other nations, those of other races, and perhaps living things that are not human. Religions and philosophies of all denominations must have been conceived around this concept of love. As long as love prevails within a society, the society can channel individual activities toward the collective good, which had been the case in American society for a long time. Unfortunately, however, as various denominations have risen to voice their own interpretation of love in competition with each other, interpretations have become dogmatic, each claiming the absolute legitimacy of their existence to the exclusion of others. Many denominations place more emphasis on defending and promoting their interpretations than on the pursuit of real love. Such institutional competition merely adds to the conflict among special interest groups. Sensitive to such a situation, quite a few religious movements have emerged in recent years, but most turn out to add yet another interpretation in competition with the others. Patriarchal outstanding will not solve this problem of disintegration. What is really lacking in contemporary America is an acceptance of, and sensitivity to, love of a different kind—on the subconscious level. Love in the profound sense must be universal and accommodating.

The maturity of manufacturing industries on the East Coast and in Middle West areas has generated an awareness of the

shortcomings of the old principles and the lack of love, but little progress toward creating new principles and fostering non-institutionalized love has been made. Meanwhile, reflection and the search for enlightenment in the old North appear to be gradually becoming replaced by the conventional virtues of the good, old American style in the South, where the powerful energy industry is beginning to lead America. The brand of capitalism and the dogma of certain religious denominations, which worked so well in the older America, should be revived according to some schools of thought in the South, without regard to the complex and changing environment of contemporary America. Until a synthesis is achieved between Northern and Southern modes of thought, America must remain in disarray. Meanwhile, the juridical profession has tried to be a coordinator among disintegrated self-interest groups. The number of litigations and lawyers in the United States is by far the biggest in the world. This is probably because litigation has become the sole method for resolving conflicting interests after the old principles and institutionalized love ceased to function as social catalysts. But, legal action is only technical and on the conscious plane. The social fabric can not be maintained only by logical persuasions, but requires shared values at the subconscious level of people. Excessive dependence upon the judicial system costs society a lot, not only in terms of time and energy for litigation, but also in terms of the lost love and principles.

Quest For a New Order

The world depression of the 1930s created new domestic and international policies: the New Deal, GATT and the dollar-gold standard. This new framework has become obsolete in the past half a century, and a new order is needed. But the new order should not be based on the old principle of the free market system only because it would mean a return to the pre-1930s period, neglecting the learning and experience of the past decades. A search for new principles and policies is urgent. Less open countries must open up more, and the United States must learn how to live with different systems. The new principle should contain flexibility, open-mindedness and a better control of special interest sectors for the sake of the larger public good.

Constructing plans and programs for such goals may not be sufficient. The inner state of mind of the people might have to undergo a change. It took a world war last time. This time I hope that there will be a rediscovery of the need for contact, a recognition that every human being, no matter what race of creed, is

part of the collective human family in which subconscious sensitivity and communication can prevail. American society has somehow lost this feeling amidst the fierce battle of conflicting egos. Japanese society, at the opposite end of the scale, maintains that love in its not so plausible form of petty interferences with each other and constant checks of conformity. Distasteful as such meddling may be, the interaction does contribute to maintaining order and integration among special interests. In fact, modern Japanese policy tends to evolve from the bureaucratic administration of trivial agreements rather than the individual assertion of ambitious designs.

Perhaps, more contact between the two systems would serve as a stimulus to both. Japanese society, although well ordered, tends to confine itself within a narrow conformity, excluding all alien factors, thus becoming stagnant in the absence of goals and initiatives. U.S. society, on the other hand, tends to be quite international, despite its little historical experience, due to its familiarity with constant conflicts among various groups, which is not so different from the state of international affairs. If the United States can combine the principles of humanistic love with this basic international outlook, the country and its people will attain maturity and regain political and economic prominence.

Already this quest has begun. More attention is being paid to discussion and employee initiative in the workplace. People are more willing to confront inner worlds and dimensions, and taboos on topics such as death have faded. A serious meeting of Eastern and Western cultures is taking place in contemporary America. It is of the utmost importance that this quest be nurtured tenderly, for therein lies our hopes for achieving an eventual coming together of all humankind. ●

The judgments and opinions expressed in this article are strictly personal and do not have any connection with organizations I am associated with.

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