

governments competed with each other in opening their own museums and theater-halls, buying expensive art objects, and inviting famous foreign artists. One of the symbolic incidents of this kind of extravagance was the redistribution of money (¥ 0.1 billion each) by the central government to every local municipalities (cities 655, towns 1999, villages 591 as of April 1989) all over Japan under the Takeshita cabinet in 1988. The Prime Minister's justification for this program was to 're-create the homeland.' By this time, Japanese consumption had been pushed to the maximum due to increase in imported foreign goods. Suffering from the huge trade surplus, Japanese government had to open and expand the domestic market to buy more from abroad. It resulted in the change of lifestyle, particularly the eating habit of Japanese people. Rice surpluses (as Japanese people eat less rice) damaged agriculture, and food self-sufficiency rate dropped sharply. Together with other impacts of 'affluence,' political instability emerged and in 1989 three LDP (the Liberal Democratic Party) Prime Ministers served in just one year. Then, came the breakdown of the 1955 regime. In 1993, the LDP lost majority in the House of Commons, and non-LDP coalition government came to power.

### 3) Japan, Internationalized?

There has never been any precedent in the history of Japan where it is tightly involved with what is happening outside the country. Therefore, any analysis of, and prospect of Japanese society today cannot be completed when this context is missing. Although this nation has been closely linked with other countries, the nature and scale of 'internationalization' today is far deeper and wider. So far, Japan's internationalization is either one-sided or very shallow. In both Heian and Meiji periods, we simply introduced various foreign cultures, ranging from Buddhism and Christianity, medical sciences and banking system, to classical music and literature. After the Meiji Restoration, Japanese Imperial Army was dispatched to different parts of Asia to wage wars or to aggrandize Empire's interests in these regions. But it never fostered the mutual relationships with other countries and their people. Contemporary internationalization is qualitatively as well as quantitatively different from those of the past, because new technology in transportation and communication has made the world smaller, a 'village.' Though preliminary, we now have many 'international' organizations to cope with the newly emerging cross-national problems utilizing commonly shared procedural rules and means. Under these circumstances, Japan has expanded its economy to export goods and to invest its money. In return, Japan, as a nation without substantial storage of natural resources, imported, basically raw materials, from abroad. This mutual transaction has been greater and more complicated, involving political, cultural and other non-economic relations as well.

As Japan approached the second stage, its international activities augmented. People began to realize that they are living 'in the world' through everyday life experiences. Thus, many of them have had the opportunity to see the earth floating in the dark universe through the eyes of astronauts. Still, to many Japanese, the outside world is far psychologically. Some critics blame the Japanese media for their inner-oriented ethnocentrism. They have criticized that the Japanese media tend to report only disasters occurred abroad whether they involved the Japanese tourists or not. It is not only the media that are inner-oriented, but also the people at large. Unlike America, for example, where the cultural and ethnic diversity are the source of social dynamism and creativity, Japan's success story is based on its relatively homogeneous culture and ethnic composition. Internally, people could maintain a harmonious relationship in a hierarchical social order of seniority, and externally, they could cope with the outsiders in a concerted way. Affluence brought back the traditional, 'particularistic' group-consciousness to the Japanese people, and the neo-nationalism emerged around the middle of 1980s. Never getting rid of the past atrocities of Japanese Imperial Army during the Pacific War, its neighboring countries are still suspicious of Japan's peace-loving pledge and distrust its good-will gestures. Destined to live with the world, Japan should discard its 'particularism' without losing its identity and integrity.

However, problems remain. Language and communication skills are among these. Lacking the true 'international' experiences in their history, Japanese cannot easily establish normal human relationships with foreigners, mainly due to their poor language skills. The fact is that the Japanese ranked 152d in average score out of 171 national groups in 1995 on TOEFL (*New York Times*, July 28, 1996). It reflects the number of