

"Daily Word" Echoes

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(Essays submitted by listeners/readers on themes of "Daily Word" messages between July 1 and August 5, 1997. Corrected and edited by Clark Offner.)

July 1 Message (Subject #326)

Our next meeting will be held on August 31st. The theme for that meeting is "Daily Word and I". I am always interested to know how these messages are being used by listeners and readers and how they have been helpful so that will also be the first theme for essays to be included in the next issue of "Daily Word" Echoes, which is expected to be available at that meeting. I hope many listeners and readers will write an essay and send it to me.

I know that Dr. Offner began the "Daily Word" telephone service on September 4, 1980. About 17 years have passed since then. It has truly been a long time. What was the world like in that year?

In 1980, in our country, a general election of the House of Representatives was held and, as a result, the Suzuki Cabinet was formed. In the United States, Mr. Reagan of the Republican Party won the presidential election, defeating Mr. Carter of the Democratic Party. In regard to my own family affairs, in that year, I constructed my own house and gained my "naturalization" in Gifu. At that time, I held the position of Director of the Prefecture.

During the initial stage of my listening to the messages, sometimes I had trouble grasping the meaning, so I dialed the number again to hear the message repeated. Soon I became able to understand the message on the first call with few exceptions. I consider the telephone message system very worthwhile because it certainly helps us improve our listening ability. "Daily Word" Echoes is also very useful for our English training because we can compare our original manuscript with the printed version following Dr. Offner's corrections and thus improve our composition ability.

I pay my respect to Dr. Offner for his efforts to continue the telephone service for such a long time because I can easily imagine how difficult it is to look for and find a suitable topic or subject everyday and to put the idea into shape in short sentences. Anyway, 17 years is a very long time. A baby born then is a high school student now. To continue something like this for such a long time deserves our admiration. I would also like to express my gratitude and respect to Mrs. Offner for her support for her husband for I believe Dr. Offner's work is greatly dependent upon her assistance. We have an expression, *naijo no kô*, in Japanese, but in the case of Mrs. Offner, she has her own sphere of activities in various areas in addition to being a so-called *naijo*.

Here, I wish to introduce another way I make use of "Daily Word". When I talk with someone about English con-

versation, I often test his or her listening ability by letting him or her listen to a "Daily Word" message. I dial the number and give the receiver to the person without any previous notice. When the message is completed, I ask the person to give me a summary of the message. One having a good command of English can tell the story in detail.

I have had a long acquaintance with "Daily Word". It is certain that this association will help much in keeping my English conversation ability constant and will prevent me from getting senile. When a person reaches my age, it is hard to enhance one's ability. It is as much as one can do to keep the present level. "Daily Word" will continue to be my good friend still more in the future.

(MIKIHICO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

I am very grateful for "Daily Word". I try to write an essay for "Daily Word" *Echoes* on every theme even if I have not thought deeply about it. I remember the first time I wrote an essay. It was January 15, 1985. I have continued to write on each theme except for three times last year when I had eye surgery. I am thankful for that now because my eyes can see well as though they were rejuvenated.

It is easier for me to write letters to foreigners since I began writing essays. Another good result of "Daily Word" is that I am better able to understand the speech of foreigners. My study at college in my youth was almost limited to reading and understanding grammar. Therefore, I was able to read books but could not make much practical use of English in my daily life at that time.

I shall continue to be a "Daily Word" fan in the future.

(MICHIKO SAND, Minami, Nagoya)

Today I will write about the usefulness of "Daily Word" in increasing our English vocabulary.

As is often pointed out English vocabulary can be divided into two groups: "active" and "passive". The former refers to words and expressions people actually use, the latter to those they understand but do not use themselves. I do not know how other listeners listen to the "Daily Word" messages, but, as for me, I listen to them to increase my passive vocabulary when I am very tired or busy, while I try to memorize a message when I have plenty of time. When trying to memorize, I find myself using a dictionary to make a thorough study of an interesting word. The words for this careful study are determined as I try to memorize the message.

A second use of the messages relate to the Monday messages which usually include interesting stories regarding various words and phrases, so I refer to those messages when I try to tell my students an interesting story of an English word and recommend those messages to my students for they are read more slowly.

In order to increase the "active" vocabulary of my students, I recommend that they listen to the Tuesday messages, some of which include essay subjects. No matter how hard we try to write a fine essay, the essay will be far from perfect. It will be corrected and printed in "Daily Word" *Echoes*, a collection of such essays from listeners or readers. By reading the revised version of our essays, we can learn how to use certain words more appropriately and effectively.

(TOMOYASU KIMURA, Nishi, Nagoya)

Nine years ago, when I was working at NTT, a senior official introduced this "Daily Word" telephone service to me. He knew my personal history from the beginning: first, an English teacher at a junior high school, then working at KDD and finally at NTT. I have continued to study English after my retirement from NTT.

I could not speak English well, however. The first time I attended the "Daily Word" meeting, I felt uneasy and could not express my opinion well. But someone gave me some advice and I felt encouraged. Little by little, it became pleasurable to attend. Also, I made several friends with people having different occupations who inspired me to improve my English-speaking ability. Fortunately, there was another reason for the pleasant atmosphere. Dr. and Mrs. Offner treated everyone with a gentle, kind attitude that gave us a good impression.

Dr. Offner is a hardworking, sincere person with a solemn look who is always thinking seriously not only about political and economic matters but also about life itself. Dr. Offner knows Japanese culture well, sometimes better than us Japanese, I'm ashamed to admit. In Japan, there are few persons who study hard and continue to think seriously who are about his age. I have been taught many things through the "Daily Word" meetings as well as the daily telephone service.

I am very happy and proud to have been given this fine opportunity to meet this most unforgettable foreigner.

(MIEKO OKUMURA, Mizuho, Nagoya)

About two years have passed since I started to listen to the telephone messages by Dr. Offner. I do not claim that my English ability has noticeably improved since then, but I am sure it has become easier for me to understand what is spoken in English than before. Usually I can understand the messages by listening only once, but at times when I cannot, I listen to them twice. However, it is true that some messages are difficult to understand even when I listen twice.

I usually listen to them around nine o'clock in the morning. It seems to me that they are easier to understand in the early morning because my brain is not so tired. I have had no experience of the

line being busy. Whenever I call the number, I immediately hear Dr. Offner's clear voice saying "Hello". The messages are not only interesting and instructive, they are also not too long. It is important for us to keep listening every day.

In regard to expense, this service is very favorable. When I was in my forties, I entered an English school for the purpose of conversing personally with an American teacher. Surprisingly enough, I paid six thousand yen for an hour's lesson. It would be more expensive today. Contrary to my expectation, I made little progress in my English ability. I think the telephone messages are more effective in elevating our English ability than such a school.

I highly appreciate Dr. Offner's efforts and I earnestly hope that he will continue transmitting the telephone messages as long as possible.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

I am sorry that I cannot attend the meeting on the 5th Sunday in August. I am writing this because I would like Dr. Offner to know how I enjoy "Daily Word" telephone messages and how I appreciate his devotion to the service. I have listened to his telephone messages for more than two years. At first, I was just curious to make a call to listen to an English message. Soon I realized that it was not only educational but also interesting and enjoyable.

We can listen to English programs on radio or television too, but a unique feature of his telephone messages is that we can hear about Dr. Offner and his family's daily life following the main topic. Though I have never met him, I know where he plays tennis every Monday morning, where his wife and daughter are working, where his granddaughter changed her plane on her way to Phoenix, Arizona this summer and so forth. Listening to his message is like listening to a call from my old friend. I also

know that he often rides his bicycle for a long distance to attend meetings. When I knew he had gotten wet due to a sudden shower while riding his bicycle, I prayed that he would not catch a cold.

I sometimes write Dr. Offner a letter when I have questions about a message. I am always thankful that he finds time to reply to my trivial questions. I felt ashamed of my ignorance when he taught me about the Japanese traditional *sekku*. I also appreciate his sincere efforts related to the editing of "Daily Word" Echoes. When I read his words in a recent issue that some essays needed much correction before being printed, I immediately understood he was speaking about mine. [Editorial comment: "Not so."] After I receive every issue, I check where he made corrections in my essays. I type them with bold letters to compare with my original manuscript. I think I have finally found a true English teacher. I hope it is not too late for me to study English as Dr. Offner noted in a recent message.

I look forward to listening to his message. But once, I felt very sorry to hear his weak voice. It was clearly recorded when he was very tired. I hope it is not too heavy a burden for him to write and record a message late at night every day. It might be a good idea to ask Mrs. Offner to fill in for him once or twice a week. She did a wonderful job while he was in the Philippines.

Incidentally, I know that telephone numbers can be replaced by letters of the alphabet in the United States. That makes it easier to remember some public telephone numbers. In Japan, we cannot use *kana* for telephone numbers. We can, however, make up a sentence or a word from the pronunciation of a telephone number. When I dial 794-6422, I always say *naku-yo, mushi ni-ni*, meaning that a *niinii zemi* (a kind of cicada) is making the sound *nii-nii*.

(TOSHIKI MIYAKE, Tsuzuki, Yokohama)

"Daily Word" is now at the center of my life and it often gives me a chance to think about faith.

When Shūsaku Endō wrote *Silence* more than 30 years ago, it was severely criticized by the Roman Catholic Church, both in Japan and abroad: "That's not Christianity, but Japanized Christianity"; "Only a kind of Jōdo Shin Sect"; "Christians must not read it". Later, Mr. Endō confessed in another book he wrote that he had become discouraged when he was rebuked, even by a French Father whom he had respected very much. But through those difficult experiences, he never gave up his attempt to deepen his thinking in relation to faith. By the time his *Deep River* was published in 1993, the situation in the religious world had greatly changed and there was a definitely more progressive attitude in the Roman Catholic Church. Leaders of the major religions in the world began to meet together for discussions and recognized one another in a desire to make the world more peaceful. 12444

"Japanized Christianity" may not be allowed by Christian theologians, but it is actually "Japanized Buddhism" that we Japanese have accepted, supported, reformed and believed in for many centuries. And that is why a complicated Indian religion, Buddhism, has been able to survive in this country becoming a part of the customs or habits of our daily lives. Actually, many new Buddhist sects were produced one after another from the Heian to the Kamakura period, formulating their doctrines from certain sutras. The founders of those new sects were very eager to save or comfort increasing miserable people in their difficult situations.

Against these innovations, orthodox Nara Buddhism, represented by the Hosso Sect, made severe criticisms, for the *busshō*, or "Buddha nature" doctrine, was quite different from the teaching of Shakamuni in India. But even in India, with

the development of a great number of Daijō Buddhist scriptures, Buddhism has not been a religion preaching only Shaka-muni's teaching, and we can see some of those doctrines criticized in certain sutras. In the Nara period, Buddhism was strongly supported and used by the government to control the nation. Priests were an elite, chosen people, devoting themselves to learning difficult Indian philosophy relating to human subconsciousness but had nothing to do with common people in need. So Amida was not the main Buddha image in every temple in the Nara period. For example, the famous huge bronze image of Tōdai-ji Temple is Birushana Buddha (Vairocana), or Dainichi Nyorai in esoteric Buddhism.

Among crucial Buddhist doctrines is *chū* (middle) along with *kū* (emptiness). It teaches that emphasis should be placed on the middle, not on the two extremes. I think that this may be a key to understanding the blurry, vague and ambiguous nature of Buddhism. And it may have been one of the factors in the facile

Japanese acceptance of a foreign religion, because it is surprisingly similar to the character of the Japanese people. Or we Japanese may have developed such a character through various ways of thinking and acting supported by this *chū* doctrine, which suited the Japanese mentality well. Western people are good at dividing concepts distinctly into two boxes—good or evil, light or darkness, dependence or independence, heaven or hell, and God or human beings. But we Japanese usually need one more box—in the middle. In it, sometimes, two opposites are complicatedly united, mixed and melted to make an inconsistent or ambiguous color or character with different degrees of color depending on the particular situation. I feel this kind of nature in the flow of the Deep River in India. Its flow includes everything, even life and death, without rejecting or dividing anything, which makes people feel

comfortable, just like being in their mother's womb.

Every time I listen to "Daily Word" messages, I feel as if I were listening to messages from God through Dr. Offner, not only on Sundays, but on other days as well, because I feel his strong love and faith in God in this great daily service with his unbelievable fortitude. "Daily Word" always urges me to open the Bible to consider how to live in this difficult society, how to raise my children, how to look after my old father, how to do my work, and of course, how to get a better command of English. Everyday and to everyone it is open just like the Deep River. Theists, deists, polytheists, pantheists and atheists all can taste and enjoy it, flowing down the current of life all together. In that sense, I think it is far beyond the differences of faith, transmitting God's Word and stimulating listeners' minds with Dr. Offner's profound faith in God.

(KIKUKO KUWAHARA, Nakagawa, Nagoya)

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I am grateful for all the effort and trouble involved in producing the "Daily Word" messages. I listen to the messages twice every day. I try to learn how to compose sentences and the usage of good expressions as well as to understand the messages themselves.

(SHOJI DOMAE, Kasugai)

For the past ten years, I have regularly looked forward to the mail every Friday. In the mailbox, I find a letter from Nagoya in which is the weekly copy of the "Daily Word" messages.

I first learned of "Daily Word" when I read an essay in which Mr. Kimura, a high school English teacher, introduced it. Earlier, in the fall of 1986, I began subscribing to a small but venerable organ of an English-lovers' society. The organ carried Mr. Kimura's essay in the spring of 1987. Soon I wrote to Dr. Offner and then my happy experience with

"Daily Word" began. Please allow me to say repeatedly, "Thank you very much, Mr. Kimura."

Thanks to Dr. Offner's constant effort to compose the messages, I have been enjoying them. It is truly a valuable experience to read the messages which give us a variety of interesting topics, including the meaning of words or phrases, the history of nations, episodes of famous people as well as such serious matters like the recycling of natural resources and so on. I have often been impressed by his knowledge about old Japanese customs I had never known.

It is true that reading the messages has given me much food for thought. But it is even more valuable for enriching thought to write on themes Dr. Offner suggests in Tuesday messages. On top of that, I can enjoy reading my corrected essays in the "Daily Word" Echoes periodical. It is also very delightful to read essays by other contributors. It is quite interesting to find different opinions on the same theme. Here again, I am grateful to Dr. Offner and his wife for producing the periodical.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Offner for the messages. I repeat over and over, "Thank you very much, Dr. Offner."

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

July 8 Message (Subject #327)

Eight years from now, in 2005, there will be an influx of Westerners and other foreign tourists to the city of Seto in suburban Nagoya to visit the World Exposition which is being planned there. After many anxious months for both the promoters and opponents of a Japanese Expo, the decision was made to designate Seto the host city. Even now, voices are raised both in support and opposi-

tion to the plan. What do you think of the idea? Are you in favor or opposed to it? Why or why not?

Seto is in the countryside, so I was surprised to hear that Expo will be held here. But as a result, many fine roads will be built, so I am in favor of holding the Expo in Seto. (YASUKO IZUMI, Seto)

I am in favor of the plan for the World Exposition to be held in the city of Seto in 2005. My reasons are as follows:

1) Japanese economic power is now strong enough to sustain the big event and the central and local governments will be able to lead the city of Seto to a successful accomplishment.

2) Japanese people can have contact with first-rate cultures from abroad, on both intellectual and material levels, without leaving their homeland. Especially, the city of Nagoya, which has been ironically called "the great country town", will receive a strong stimulation to attain to a higher level of culture.

3) Conversely, people from other countries who come here will understand present-day Japan through first-hand, personal experience.

4) Now that the decision has been made, we must have a positive attitude to make this big event successful. Negative thinking or opposition tactics will result in a most unfavorable result for Japan.

Many good things are expected to be introduced to us by holding the World Exposition near Nagoya. On the other hand, we will have some bad things brought from abroad at the same time. We must promote this event with our utmost efforts while working to prevent an invasion of undesirable things from outside into this area.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

It was December 24, 1994 when I visited Mr. Muramatsu and his family in Seto, staying overnight after the party at the Takahama Church to commemorate the publishing of Dr. Offner's book, *Kokoro no Sanpo Michi*. Yes, it was my one and only chance to visit that city, so I cannot say now whether I saw the area of the city which will become the site of the World Exposition in 2005 or not. As the decision has been made by the responsible persons, Seto will be in better condition to welcome Westerners and other foreign visitors in eight years.

Now I am thinking of a world exposition in Japan. It is a very big event, similar to the Olympic Games. It requires a very spacious ground for such an exposition. I am afraid that many trees will be cut down to erect buildings in each section and that the air will be polluted. Hotels will be needed for the tremendous crowds of people from all over the world. Also, it will be wasteful to tear down the buildings after the event is over.

Japan is a small, over-populated country. From now on, Japan should return to nature rather than trying to keep up with other big countries. Our present level of civilization is sufficient. Artificial things are seen everywhere. I hope that all people may easily visit anyplace in the world and enjoy the beauty of nature. They should responsibly dispose of their own rubbish, of course. Then anyone can enjoy the scenery comfortably as they wish. This would be the best World Exposition.

World expositions that have been held in the past, however, have been wonderful. All who visited them must have benefited from them. And I am happy that the city of Seto will become well-known all over the world. I hope the Exposition there will be successful.

(KAZUKO TAGUCHI, Fukushima)

If I am asked to give a "yes" or "no" answer regarding Expo, my answer is

"no". Most of us who live in Aichi Prefecture did not have a chance to express our views. Thus, in the first place, I think it is strange that the government makes decisions arbitrarily without consulting the citizens. If the city of Seto takes some action in this regard, I shall be happy.

I read in a newspaper today that more important problems for Aichi Prefecture than hosting Expo, include the following: 1) Comprehensive coverage for welfare and health for all ages; 2) Lifelong education opportunities; 3) Encourage volunteer activities; 4) Cultural activities for citizens; 5) Technological exchange; 6) Cooperative international exchange; 7) Promote commerce and service industries; 8) Promote tourism as a principal industry; 9) Improve international transportation; 10) Improve local transportation; 11) Protect the natural environment; 12) Recycle resources.

I hope these projects are advanced and that we can cooperate in achieving them. (MICHIKO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

Anyhow it was good news that the city of Seto in Aichi Prefecture was selected as the site of the World Exposition in 2005. (I use the word "anyhow" advisedly because this selection poses many problems that must be solved in the future, as I will note later.) I think it was good for Aichi or the central district as a whole when I look back at the history of defeats this central district has experienced—related to the 1988 Olympics and World Cup Soccer in 2002.

Concerning the "phantom" Olympics in Nagoya, I experienced the defeat personally as one of the persons concerned. I was the Director of the Planning Department of the Prefecture in 1982 when Nagoya was defeated by Seoul as the site of the Olympics. In the evening the decision was made (I do not remember the date), we, the persons concerned, were waiting for the glad news from Governor

Nakaya (who was attending the I. O. C. conference in Baden Baden, Germany), watching television in a hotel room in Nagoya. In the next room, splendid dishes were already prepared for a celebration, waiting for us. At last, the name of the city was announced by Mr. Samaranch, the president of the I. O. C., but the name was Seoul, not Nagoya. The announcement struck us all speechless for a while. A little later, Mr. Nakaya conveyed word of the defeat by telephone and Vice-Governor Suzuki received it. It was all over. We turned our steps homeward in knots, silently, leaving the dishes prepared in the next room untouched, which I feel was regrettable even now.

Before the selection of Aichi this time, two kinds of proverbs were prepared by journalists to express the result. One was "What happens twice will happen thrice", and the other was "All things thrive at thrice". We were happy to see the latter expression hit the mark but I think we cannot welcome the selection of Aichi without reserve because there are many problems which must be solved in order to host the exposition.

The first problem is environmental disruption. A large area of forests and fields must be destroyed to prepare the site. How can the site be utilized after the exposition is over? The second problem is financial. The prime minister has already declared that the central government cannot provide very much money. And the business sector cannot be expected to contribute so much because they must also provide funds for the new airport which is expected to be completed by the opening day of the Exposition.

There is a basic controversy why the central district must compete with the Tokyo and Osaka districts in hosting such events as the Olympics or the Exposition. They say that the subsiding of the Nagoya district is remarkable in every area these days, but that does not seem to matter. Anyway, the die is cast.

There is no longer room for hesitation. Aichi Prefecture (Governor Suzuki is my old friend) should aim at bearing its full fruit with the least expense since things have come to this place.

(MIKIHICO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

It was reported that on June 12, the city of Seto, Aichi Prefecture, was designated to host the 2005 World Exposition, winning the support of 52 of the 81 voting members of the Committee. Calgary, in Canada, was the only other city seeking the designation. There was much criticism that Japan had been too active and spent too much money to win. Now, the city of Seto must host the six-month extravaganza which will open in 2005. Seto is famous as a historic pottery center on the outskirts of Nagoya.

After the end of the Second World War, Japan expanded her economy and became a great economic power. She is no longer allowed to be a threat to the rest of the world by expanding her exports. To survive, she is urged to increase her domestic consumption. It would be quite natural for her to expect a vitalizing of her economy by hosting such a big event as the World Exposition or the Olympic Games and to anticipate that, ultimately, the world at large would be benefited through it.

We cannot deny that in all things there are both a positive side and a negative one. The Expo will draw a large number of visitors from inside and outside the country. The construction of various kinds of facilities will destroy the environment. It is quite uncertain whether or not the project will be profitable in the long run. However, we should not overlook the positive value the Expo may have in the future.

Consider the main theme of the Exposition. It affirms the cohabitation of nature and human beings, seeking for a way to face the coming of a new civilization. The site of the Expo is divided

into several zones, such as a pavilion zone, a natural forest zone and a village mountain zone. They are planning to compel visitors to seriously consider the question of how to live with nature. There, villagers will be seen gathering firewood in the mountain, where plants grow and animals live peacefully. Visitors will come to understand how villagers in the Edo Era lived, in a way that included some recycling. The area is famous as the habitat of Gifu butterflies and Shide magnolia, which have been designated natural monuments.

Japan has achieved economic growth so rapidly that we have destroyed nature too much and have forgotten its importance. If we can learn something of value regarding the way of cohabitation of nature and human beings, the Expo would be quite successful. Since the Expo will draw many visitors from inside and outside the country, we hope that through the Expo, mutual understanding and friendship with other countries will be deepened. Today it is quite desirable that in the planning of any project, the future use of the facilities be carefully considered beforehand. The pavilions will be used as an educational and research center. I pray that Expo will be quite successful.

(MICHIKO KAWAMURA, Meguro, Tokyo)

The only thing I know about Seto is that it is a city in Aichi which produces pottery. I didn't know that people there wanted to host the World Exposition until I read in a newspaper that the decision was made in Paris.

It was very strange to see the pros and cons begin to appear after the news. It seemed that there had been no serious discussions in the city before they decided to become a candidate. I think it is very similar to the case of the Winter Olympics in Nagano. Now is the time that they should discuss how to carry it out successfully.

We have seen or heard much bleak news lately. Therefore, it might be a good idea to have another international festival in Japan. It may help us to forget many problems we are facing for a while.

(TOSHIAKI MIYAKE, Tsuzuki, Yokohama)

Frankly speaking, I didn't expect Aichi Prefecture to win the prize of becoming the host city for Expo 2005 for Nagoya failed in a similar competition for the 1988 Olympics and there was a strong protest against the development of the Seto area for the world exposition. Two colleagues of mine at Chigusa High School are actively involved in efforts to protect nature from being damaged and I recall how impressed I was by their enthusiastic campaign to preserve the forest called Kaisho-no-Mori. So I came to agree with them and didn't expect Aichi to be chosen as the host prefecture for the exposition to be held in the fifth year of the 21st century.

Now that the decision has been made, however, I am very happy about it and sincerely hope this gigantic project will be successful and meaningful. To me, the last exposition in Japan was very special, for I met a wonderful lady from Canada when I visited the Ontario Pavilion.

Her name is Beverly Neeb. She lives in Stratford, Ontario, working as a secretary for a local newspaper, *The Beacon Herald*. Bev and I have been corresponding with each other for the past 27 years since we met and exchanged addresses in Osaka. In March, 1970, my father took me to Osaka as a kind of celebration for my success in passing the university entrance exam. As you can imagine, we visited many pavilions and enjoyed various events. Toward the end of our visit to the Expo, we were tired and wanted to enter a pavilion that was spacious, uncrowded and comfortable to be in. The Ontario Pavilion was one such place. Soon after we entered we were led into

a theater where we saw a documentary film on the natural beauty of Canada. After the film, I noticed three Canadian ladies sitting behind us and tried to speak to them in English. One of them was Bev. She and her friends were at the Expo as members of a Canadian choir of high school students. Thus the 1970 Exposition at Osaka gave me a wonderful chance to make friends with a Canadian, with whom I became a good friend.

When I went to the United States in 1974 as an exchange student in a special program co-sponsored by Nagoya Broadcasting Network and the University of Utah, I rode a Greyhound bus to Ontario, and on a holiday we had while in England, I took my family to Stratford.

The World Exposition will be held after developing some wild areas in Seto, but I don't think such development is always related to their destruction. So I hope this international cultural fair will be held in harmony with nature. Apart from this, I am sure it will provide a good opportunity for those who are interested in meeting people from different countries, just like Bev and me.

(TOMOYASU KIMURA, Nishi, Nagoya)

Of the 81 voting members of the International Bureau of Expositions (BIE) meeting in France, 52 supported Seto, Japan, 27 favored Calgary, Canada, one abstained and another cast an invalid ballot. Setoites and Owariasahians (Seto and Owariasahi are neighboring cities, in one of which my family and I have lived for three decades) rejoiced as Seto got the nod over Calgary to host the 2005 Exposition on June 12, 1997.

It was decided that "The 2005 World Exposition, Japan" will be a six-month extravaganza opening on March 25 and closing on September 25, 2005 with the slogan: "Beyond Development; Rediscovering Nature's Wisdom" along with the sub-themes of "Eco-Communities" and "Art of Life". Included in the 504 hectares

of the Kaisho-no-Mori zone in the southeastern part of Seto will be: Experimental models for 21st century cities and human societies in harmony with the eco-system; A testing ground for building an attractive model of a highly creative socio-economic activity; A "global clearing house of wisdom", offering a forum for the consideration of global issues; Global communication by permitting people from all around the world to participate in interactive dialogue and exchange through the use of sophisticated telecommunications technology; Focus for interaction among peoples of the dynamic Asia-Pacific region and an opportunity for them to share their ideas with the rest of the world. Now that people have begun to realize the serious state of environmental contamination and pollution, the destruction of nature, etc. which had been ignored during the period of economic growth, an expiation for overweening pride is needed at the start of the Aichi Exposition.

If you are wondering when I will get to the theme, pay attention! I'm there! I believe beyond all doubt that for the time being it is impossible for me to decide whether I am for or against the hosting of "The 2005 World Exposition". I am, to tell the truth, in an ambivalent "pro and con" attitude because I succeeded in becoming one of the 444 volunteer staff members and 70 corporate bodies of the Seto International Center which was organized on April 1, 1997. Now that I have joined the volunteers, together with some of my acquaintances, including Ms. Kazue Okuzawa, who has written for this periodical, Ms. Teruko Hasegawa, who is a superintendent of Kasugai Cultural Center, Ms. Mina Hiei, who is a camera woman for Green City Cable Television Broadcasting Corporation, Mr. Atsuyasu Fujii, who is a councilman of Seto Municipal Assembly, and other staff members, I am willing and feel compelled to do what it takes to make this project

succeed, to develop relationships with visiting customers from abroad and/or to find solutions for the bewildering array of nuts we need to crack. "Let the rain feed the rice paddies." "Open up the door to gain various opinions."

No matter how much time I spend, there is always more to learn. I realize that I cannot do everything, but I would be very upset if I chose to quit. I am still very immature, but I would not be content to stay uninvolved. I have decided, therefore, to reincorporate some of the activities that used to mean much to me. I do not know whether this will help or harm my health, but I'm sure it will improve my mental well-being.

Though I have already used up too much space, I wish to conclude with the thought that to make such a project as the 2005 World Exposition succeed, the greatest possible effort must be put forth. Mr. Hiromichi Inoue, mayor of Seto, explained that the previous world expositions have been only exhibitions, but we should make the 2005 World Exposition the greatest one ever, in which people from all over the world can participate so as to solve problems and to make it popular among the younger generation for the next millennium. Offering the most sophisticated environmental technology, Japan, as a leading progressive nation, should provide progressive Asian nations with example model cities which are harmonious with the natural environment, showing how it is possible to solve difficult problems.

The theme of "Beyond Development; Rediscovering Nature's Wisdom" challenges us to create a natural environment in which we can peacefully coexist together, to visualize this noble ideal and to find a shortcut to solve a problem common to the entire human race. I think that, along with its broadening and strengthening the economy the 2005 World Exposition will provide limitless opportunities to experience new life

styles and social systems firsthand for many people as it encourages community prosperity and social harmony. As the first environmental exposition in history, there may be many people who object to it, but even so, it must succeed. It should be remembered that all information on the concrete measures suggested, data of environmental assessment and/or details of expenditures should be open to the public. Consequently, it is well to get the approval of inhabitants of the related regions and the Japanese nation. The entire idea related to the theme is only in abstract form on a desk. About seven years are left until the opening of the exposition, which is not enough. It is high time we hammered out a clever solution.

(JAIME IWAI, Owariasahi)

The Seto Expo Committee has hoisted a grandiose banner: Creating a New Globe with the Wisdom of Nature.

Now that Japan is to host Expo 2005 in Aichi Prefecture, it becomes imperative for Japanese people to work for the success of the grand event. In view of the circumstances, however, we cannot ignore the fact that the planners have a long, bumpy road ahead of them. There are many difficulties in their way.

First of all, in regard to the site of the Expo. I hear it includes a forest with an area of about 250 hectares and surrounding hills and plains of 540 hectares. Of course, the forest must be destroyed before it can become the site of the exposition. Naturalists have every reason to be concerned about keeping the surrounding environment intact during and after the construction of many pavilions. They will be intolerant of the forest being destroyed merely for the purpose of building pavilions. How will the planners be able to persuade the conservationists to cease their opposition? How will the theme of the Expo, "Creating a New Globe, Wisdom of Nature" be harmonized

with the destruction of the forest? We should keep close watch on what is going on with this grandiose project.

The above-mentioned problem is nothing but the tip of an iceberg. According to newspapers, proponents of the project declare they have a grand design to demonstrate the great challenges facing not only Japan but all nations as well, such as the environment, food, natural resources, health and education. They proudly assert that the coming Expo will build a model city recycling its waste perfectly. They should remember the saying, "Easier said than done". After all, there is not much time left. I cannot help but pray that they will put forth their utmost effort to make their grand design bear fruit that will go down in history.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

July 15 Message (Subject #328)

Today's theme is: "Diet". Perceptive listeners/readers will immediately recognize that there are two very different meanings of this word. One kind of diet is the usual food one eats, or a special selection of food chosen for medical or health reasons. Do you watch your diet carefully? What kind of diet do you prefer? What do you think of the diet of your country as compared to that of other countries? A homonym of this kind of diet is used to denote the national legislative assembly of Japan. What do you think about the present state of the Japanese Diet? Are you happy with its composition and its recent activities? Either of these meanings of "diet" may be chosen as the theme for an essay.

Diet is one of the most interesting and familiar subjects for me. I always pay attention to my diet to keep healthy. For example, I put special encapsulated tablets into a bottle of tap water for eight hours to make the water purer.

I don't use chemical stock in my cooking. I prepare my own out of several kinds of vegetables or small dried sardines (*niboshi*). Furthermore, my cooking is only slightly seasoned. I also try to eat food containing minerals and calcium to prevent my bones from becoming weak. Hence, I eat the small dried sardines after I prepare stock, but I think most people who use them to prepare stock throw them away afterward.

In addition, since one of my acquaintances recommended that I imbibe more vinegar, I sometimes drink a little bit of it. However, I love Japanese sweets. If I eat them often, I ingest too much sugar, so I eat them only moderately.

(HIROMI FURUTA, Kita, Nagoya)

I do not want to write about the Japanese Diet, or national legislative assembly, because it seems to be a place for political struggles only aiming at party interests rather than the pursuit of happiness for the people.

Generally speaking, to maintain our good health it may be advisable to put us on a diet. However, I do not like to follow instructions that I should eat some things but not other things. We should be allowed to eat any food whatever, but the important thing is we should not eat too much of anything. Our stomach should be kept a little empty, about 20 to 30 percent, even after taking a meal.

To make our stomach feel at ease is the first condition for maintaining good health. This kind of knowledge has been conveyed in Japan from about 300 years ago. Some medical researchers in the Edo era, such as Ekken Kaibara, advocated this idea and published a book about how to keep healthy.

I'm afraid today's medical researchers are apt to mislead patients by giving them too much medicine, too many injections and consign them to medical machines which are not completely reliable. Rather than relying on those methods based on human knowledge, we should control the quantity of food and drink ourselves, exercising natural prudence.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

Dr. Offner referred to two different meanings of the word "diet". As I have touched upon the second meaning (assembly, congress) several times in this periodical before, here I will consider the first meaning of the word.

An English dictionary gives the meaning of "diet" as follows: 1) what one usually eats and drinks, 2) a special choice of food eaten in sickness. There, I could not find the meaning which we usually give it: restriction of quantity or kind of food for reasons of health or beauty. I may go further and say the word means to grow slim or to lose weight by reducing the quantity of food. This may be a special meaning which we have added to the former, original meaning. Here I will write about "diet" in the nuance we have given it.

Today, a matter of primary concern in regard to our health is how to prevent obesity, for excessive fatness is thought to be one of the main factors in many diseases. But it is very difficult to lose weight (to remove surplus fat) while keeping healthy. I, like others, usually try to watch my diet carefully because fat is accumulating in my belly. I have learned from experience that we should avoid fatty oil in our food for that reason. For example, we should eat red (lean) meat, avoiding fat. Once I abstained from eating tempura even though it is one of my favorite dishes. Alcoholic beverages should also be avoided because they are high in calories. For a while I also practiced self-control in

drinking at supper, but soon I realized that it is difficult to continue such an unnatural way of dieting by controlling one's appetite.

The most reasonable way is to remove surplus fat by exercising, using the energy supplied by food. But it is also very difficult to remove excessive fat by physical exercise alone. One hour's jogging is offset by one glass of beer. What I learned at last was the remodeling of the body, bringing into active play all the muscles of the body. The method I adopted is an exercise using dumbbells. Ten minutes a day, I engage in gymnastics grasping a 4-kilogram dumbbell in each hand. An hour's jogging everyday is beyond my ability, but I can endure ten minutes of exercise using dumbbells. I have continued this exercise for about two years. I no longer need to care a bit about taking fatty food or an alcoholic beverage.

I hear that an unnatural way of dieting is prevalent among young girls. They abstain from even basic nutritional foods that are needed to keep the body healthy. Preserving a healthy body is important for becoming a wholesome mother in the future. In former days, a plump, round body was the symbol of a lovely woman. Why do young girls today yearn after a thin body beyond necessity? We cannot find beauty in a girl who has an unsound body. "A sound mind in a sound body."

(MIKIHICO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

I will write about the diet related to food with few calories, for I have no interest in the Japanese Diet even though I am Japanese and live in Japan, because I feel that that Diet is far removed from my life. I used to express my view of the Diet previously by voting, but by expectations were not realized. After repeated disappointments, I now feel unrelated to the Diet and there is an emptiness in my heart as a result.

Another kind of diet is aimed at becoming slim or healthy. Such diets seem to be popular among Japanese young women. Physicians say that this kind of diet is not good for the health. It may cause anemia and sterility in young people and loss of strength for all persons. Who says that a slim body is good? I hope to have a healthy body and heart to honor God. (MICHIKO SANDO, Minami, Nagoya)

I looked up the word "diet" in a *katakana* dictionary. It stated that it is a regular meal or a special kind of meal to avoid getting fat. Movie stars in Hollywood began it and it is now popular among women around the world.

(YASUKO IZUMI, Seto)

I have lived for many years. Even now, I cannot forget the shock I had in my childhood to see the miserable conditions and the poor diet of the peasants working hard all day long in the country. I also remember that in the cities, especially in Tokyo, some people could enjoy various kinds of delicious food, which was not so different from the situation today. During the Second World War, city dwellers seriously suffered from a shortage of food. In comparison, farmers were much better off. For a while after the end of the war, conditions were still bad but gradually improved.

Before the war, some people enjoyed Western dishes and ate bread, milk and meat, but they were exceptional. After the war, Japanese came to be strongly influenced by the American diet. Elementary School lunch programs came to include bread, milk and meat. When those children came of age in the early 1970s, Japan's first fast-food hamburger shop opened on the Ginza in Tokyo. Now hamburgers, fried chicken and home-delivered pizza are quite common all over the country.

While I was raising my children, I tried to prepare various kinds of nutri-

tious dishes for them. Now, they have left home and my husband and I live alone. I try to make food good for old people's health. I try to take calcium as much as possible and 30 items of food a day. I deplore the fact that I am obese and cannot lose weight, though I try hard to avoid calories. Fortunately, I am quite healthy and so is my husband, despite having a minor heart problem.

Today, many women working outside the home may not have enough time to prepare meals for their families by themselves, carefully watching their diet. Census statistics indicate that the number of single households, including young and old people, is increasing. Such people are apt to depend on eating out or on take-out services. It is quite remarkable that in my neighborhood fish dealers and vegetable stores have decreased rapidly because they could not survive and supermarkets, take-out shops and restaurants have increased. Maybe no area of Japan can remain untouched by this trend.

Surely those establishments will satisfy our needs quite easily, but I cannot accept the trend as a healthy one. We should realize the importance of following a balanced diet with sensibly combined food to maintain sound health. Women especially should make every possible effort as a mother or a wife to prepare good meals for their families with loving kindness and tender care, no matter how busy they may be. Thereby family love and bonding will be strengthened.

Today, Japanese have come to enjoy the highest longevity in the world. Their standard of living has risen remarkably and sanitary conditions have greatly improved. The Japanese way of cooking, using various kinds of foods, lightly seasoned, has come to be recognized as good for the health. At the same time, we should be aware that Japan's food self-sufficiency is among the lowest of the industrialized nations and that the eating trends nowadays are not desirable.

for maintaining good health. We should try to improve our diet, making it a healthier one. At the same time, we should try to be more aware of the large number of people in the world who are suffering from a shortage of food and are living in misery. We should try never to waste food in our daily lives and try to give the suffering people as much aid as possible. We old people can still remember the serious shortage of food during the war.

(MICHIKO KAWAMURA, Meguro, Tokyo)

A basic diet procedure is the development of an eating plan. The foods we eat have a measurable effect and influence on our bodies.

According to the instructions of some experts, it is good to include some light-fat foods, for the problem is not only how much fat we eat, but what kind of fat it is. Generally, the type of fat found most commonly in fish is good for one's health. Particularly bright blue colored fish, such as mackerel and sardines are filled with many vitamins and minerals. Grains, starchy vegetables and legumes are rich in Vitamin B, antioxidants, some minerals and fiber. Foods made from soybeans, such as tofu, contain many beneficial compounds animal foods lack. Carbohydrates, especially when eaten with no protein or fat, may be mentally soothing. We should try to eat as many kinds of vegetables and fruits as possible in our diet.

These are valuable suggestions for our reference when composing an eating plan that can help turn our brains into lean, clear-thinking organs while, not incidentally, helping to protect us against cancer, heart disease, diabetes and premature aging! The last thing I want is to become ill, mentally weak and silly in my old age!

My recent physical checkup showed a rather high cholesterol level. I have an appointment with a dietitian. It is my

daily concern to maintain a balanced diet and to lower my cholesterol.

(SADAE HASHIMOTO, Minami, Nagoya)

When I hear the word "diet", it reminds me of some people, including men, who try to reduce the amount of food they eat and to exercise to keep themselves slender and tall. But many of them cannot get slender even though they try to become a vegetarian and eat fruits instead of cakes. Some others were told by physicians to eat a spare diet to overcome glycosuria. They made an earnest effort. Now they seem to be healthy, but they must still watch their diets carefully.

In the old days, Japanese ate much fish meat rather than beef, pork and chicken. We used to eat the food with *miso*, flavored with soy sauce at home. Sometimes, we ate the food flavored with curry or tomato ketchup. When somebody visited us and joined us for a meal, chicken steak was served. I knew there were hams, sausages and bacon in the butcher shop near our house, but I liked the fish tempura that mother cooked. I am sure we were all quite healthy. Even now, I continue to like fish meat and vegetables, but sometimes I enjoy eating Kentucky Fried Chicken and cheese or some other foods that came from the West. I am sure that my cholesterol is low.

Previously I thought that fruit did not make us fat, but I soon learned that some fruit contains much sugar which makes us fat. We sometimes avoided potatoes to keep from getting fat. Someone said that bread has fewer calories than rice. Someone else said that they eat many cucumbers in summer to fill their stomach. Although it is true that eating too many carbohydrates makes us fat, it is necessary for us to take some every day. Bread, rice or noodles are necessary for bodily growth. If we eat only cucumbers to satisfy our appetite,

we will suffer from the results of an unbalanced diet which is not nutritious. So I enjoy eating and chewing well the necessary food and engage in moderate exercise.

(KAZUKO TAGUCHI, Fukushima)

I am not sure when the fashion of following a diet to become slimmer took root among healthy-looking girls in this land. It is absolutely ridiculous to see young people in their growing period going so far as to follow an unbalanced diet only to become as slim as fashion models. In doing so, they throw away their own health for the diet.

To begin with, they ought to have some knowledge of dietetics before deciding on any kind of diet. I am dumbfounded to learn how easygoing some girls are in being taken in by showy ads. They forget to take care of themselves seriously just to get slim. Getting slim, even at the cost of their own health is the supreme aim for them. I urge them to follow a proper diet.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

July 22 Message (Subject #329)

There are a number of ethical problems at the present time that require serious consideration on the part of responsible, conscientious thinkers in both medical and religious professions. Among them are the removal of life support systems under certain conditions from people who are expected to die without them, euthanasia, the advisability of cloning human beings and the transplantation of organs from people who are brain dead. Needless to say, consideration of such problems should not be limited to professionals. The public at large also needs to be informed about the actual situation and possible implications

of such measures. Have you given these matters much thought? Have you had personal experiences related to them?

Whenever I am asked questions about such serious problems as the physical treatment of human beings, I am afraid I tend to give an emotional response rather than a reply based on reason. My basic thought about the human body is that it was created by an almighty creator, not by any human being no matter how capable. The almighty creator may be called, in my opinion, nature or God. Therefore, a normal body can never be created or recreated by any human being who is unable to be perfect.

It may be a bit extreme to state that I do not trust doctors or medicines, but I regret to say that, except for some conscientious ones, what they think and do seem to me to be unreasonable in many cases. I do not mean to say, however, that weakened people who cannot alleviate their sickness by themselves should not rely on a reliable doctor and other medical aids. Those aids may be, in some degree, helpful for them. The most important thing is for them to adjust their daily lives in keeping with the natural or divine Providence and make their body so sound that it would not be necessary for them to rely on doctors or other medical treatment.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

The percentage of aged persons is increasing year after year, and, accompanying this phenomenon, ways of meeting death are becoming more diverse and difficult. The question is: how to recognize when death occurs and how to give one's consent regarding it.

It is a universal fact everywhere in the world and throughout history that people desire to die in peace and quiet-

ness when the time comes. There are many temples in Japan which are called *pokkuri-dera*. People with a certain kind of faith are said to be able to greet death suddenly (*pokkuri*) without suffering from a lingering illness. Everyone knows that "man is mortal" and if there is no alternative, one will surely wish to die peacefully.

How to attend to a terminally ill patient is a very difficult problem. Doctors make plans for prolonging a patient's life even when the patient is expected to die very soon because that is their duty. But it is a controversial problem if the medical treatment gives much pain to the patient and if the patient has already lost consciousness. If a family member is in such a condition, most people would give their consent to having the life-support system removed. At least, I would do so. The word *songen-shi* (dying with dignity) is being used very often these days. It is based on an advanced directive, a living will, to decide one's termination for oneself, rejecting purposeless prolonging measures to keep one's body alive. I hear that this system is already recognized by law in the state of California. Euthanasia has been discussed for a long time. Many people have been concerned about it from of old. I also hear that in the Netherlands a new law was enacted in 1994 under which doctors can practice euthanasia on a terminally ill patient, based on the patient's will and with other conditions attached, related to medical prescriptions or injections. It is, so to speak, a kind of self-generated euthanasia. Euthanasia in the traditional sense of the word (not necessarily with the consent of the person involved) has not yet lawfully been adopted anywhere.

The problem of "brain death" is also very controversial today. Recently the government introduced a bill concerning brain death. The bill regards brain death as human death and approves the extrac-

tion of internal organs—such as the heart, the liver or the kidneys from the body on the assumption that they will be transplanted in another person's body. For a long time, human death had been judged by the cessation of cardiac or respiratory functions. Can we agree to give up our family member's body even when the heart is still beating and breathing is continuing even though the brain is dead? In order to avoid disputes, the bill prescribes that the judgment of brain death be adopted only when the body is needed for the transplantation of organs.

We should welcome the development of medical science, but, at the same time, anxiety caused by the new technical knowledge is serious. If techniques related to life-support systems or transplantation of organs had not been developed, we would not be concerned about the ethical problems mentioned above. (MIKIKO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

First of all, I must say that I feel a contradiction within myself regarding this theme. In regard to euthanasia, or transplantations and so on, my primary concern is for the other person. Perhaps I shall say "No". It is not easy to make a law relating to these matters for our thoughts are different even when our religion is the same. All people have different ways of living and thinking. This cannot be decided by a law. Each person must decide for himself or herself.

(MICHIKO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

One Sunday last April, I was invited by my friend, who is ten years older than I, to attend a seminar on "Life and Death in the Present Society" under the auspices of both the Aichi and Tōkai Buddhist Associations. Following lectures by two professors in the morning, there was a panel discussion in the afternoon by three other professors of medicine, law and religion regarding euthanasia (an-

raku-shi) and death with dignity (*son-gen-shi*). It was a very interesting three-hour discussion and included listeners' participation by their asking questions or being asked for opinions.

The law professor introduced various cases of euthanasia and death with dignity in Japan and abroad and indicated the conditions under which euthanasia was permitted (by doctors) in a Yokohama Court ruling in 1995: 1) Patient is suffering from unendurable physical pain; 2) Patient is expected to die in the very near future; 3) There are no other means to alleviate the pain; 4) Patient clearly gives assent to the shortening of life. Especially for #4, there remain difficult problems and controversy relating to the time of the person's giving assent: cases of children under 14 years of age and patients with mental illness. He also asked us listeners three questions: "If you were a patient under conditions #1-#3, would you choose euthanasia?" "If the person were your spouse, would you prefer that he or she choose it?" "If you were a doctor and the law permitted it, could you perform a mercy killing with your own hands?" As for the first question, more than 2/3 of the listeners answered "Yes", including me. In contrast, when one of the listeners asked the same question to the panelists, their answers were all "No".

The professor of medicine from Nagoya University explained his "No" answer. Today's medical progress is so remarkable that most unbearable physical pain can be alleviated. Previously, using morphine had been said to shorten a patient's life, but now many cases show that removing severe pain by morphine results in a longer life because patients feel better without pain. So he stated that he felt little necessity to choose euthanasia himself.

The religion professor's answer was based on his Buddhist belief. Life should be left to the "law of nature" and should

not be relegated to the hands of human beings. To shorten life artificially is against the dignity of life as well as to prolong vainly the life that is expected to end soon by connecting many tubes to the body. At present, euthanasia suggests the danger of mercy killings of weak, sick and old people who actually want to live longer, only to satisfy their families. If a person is bedridden and cannot live a meaningful life, must he or she feel useless in society? No. There is no being that is useless in this world. Each being is valuable in itself. Every being in nature has a valuable life which constantly teaches us something important. Human beings should not be viewed only from the standpoint of rationality or utility. Before legislating on euthanasia, we must build a society in which old and sick people do not feel the futility that may make them choose euthanasia.

The professor of law, who was found to be a Catholic by chance at the end of the meeting, stated that the problem of euthanasia can never be solved simply by enacting laws because every patient has peculiar circumstances relating to age, thinking and family situations. Thus each case should be given careful consideration by a group, including the patient, the patient's family as well as the doctors (more than one) without simply depending on a law.

Songen-shi was another problem. Actually, at the meeting, I came to recognize clearly the difference between *anraku-shi* and *songen-shi*, which denotes death resulting from the cessation of medical care to a patient who is without severe pain but who cannot avoid death in the near future.

In this aging society, more and more people are interested in these problems. I have deepened my thinking and recognize that life is unfathomable to us and, even more, to human-made laws.

(KIKUKO KUWAHARA, Nakagawa, Nagoya)

It was in 1978 that the first test-tube baby was born in Britain. That was a marvellous achievement enabling childless couples to have children, but at the same time, it was the beginning of many kinds of problems related to childbirth. It was reported that Steptoe and Edwards, the doctors who masterminded the conception and delivery of the baby, would have been able to determine the child's sex and that Edwards advocated test-tube selection of the offspring's sex in order to reduce such sex-linked diseases as hemophilia.

Now, in 1997, it seems fairly easy to discover whether a fetus is male or female. According to my son, who had a third child born in March, the doctor said it seemed likely it would be a boy, as far as he could tell by ultra-sonic diagnosis. It was indeed a boy. In our son's case, the first child was a girl and the second was a boy, so we would have been happy whether it was a boy or a girl. But some couples fervently want a boy or a girl. In countries such as China where only one child is allowed per couple, they may naturally want a boy. To such couples, making use of the technique to know the fetus's sex may be irresistible.

Will not the day come when a doctor asks a pregnant woman if she wants to give birth or have an abortion after knowing the sex of the embryo? My wife was asked if she wanted to have the baby or not when she first went to hospital and learned she was pregnant. She said she did and so my son is living now and has his third child. But in a country like Japan where abortions are easily available, the above-mentioned fear is not totally groundless.

The question of surrogate mothers can be a problem, too. For reasons of health on the part of the mother, another woman can receive the fertilized egg in her womb and give birth to the other woman's child. But I wonder if there are not complications about such a matter.

Furthermore, it has now become possible to produce clones of sheep. It must be possible to produce clones of human beings if so desired. Will people be ethically allowed to do such a thing?

The first offspring of in-vitro fertilization must be nineteen years old now, if that person has continued to live. I hope such people will become normal members of society, just like everyone else. (TOMIZO SHOBO, Ishibe, Shiga)

A bill on organ transplants passed the Diet last June, paving the way for transplanting the heart and other organs from brain-dead donors. This legislation was a victory for some medical professionals, who are impatient about using their surgical knives, over their opponents who wanted to give the issue more consideration from every aspect.

On one hand, Japanese patients have received organ transplants in foreign countries. On the other hand, people remain opposed to coming to terms with brain death as human death. They are on the horns of a dilemma. It is true that paving the way for heart and other organ transplants from brain-dead donors is one solution. But a question remains. A critical patient is deemed brain dead when doctors think it necessary to take the patient's organs out for transplantation. And yet at the same time, the patient is still not dead in terms of the conventional standard of life and death. All is up to the doctors who are going to use surgical knives for the operation. It would be no problem if brain death should be equal to human death. But nobody can deny the position that brain death does not always mean human death. Doctors concerned would be at a loss which patient's life to save if two patients are present before them: one who is willing to give part of his or her body after he or she is dead or the other who could be freed from a critical condition through transplantation. Can it

not be helped that the general public can only stand by and see what happens in the medical world?

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

July 29 Message (Subject #330)

Forty years ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency was established under the sponsorship of the United Nations. The aim of this intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Vienna, is to promote the safe and peaceful uses of atomic energy. It is authorized to purchase and sell fissionable materials and to offer technical assistance for the peaceful application of nuclear energy. Since atomic power was first utilized in the production of devastating bombs that were dropped on two Japanese cities in 1945, the problem of what use to make of this awesome source of energy has become an international problem. What are your thoughts regarding atomic energy which is widely used in Japan? Do you think Japan relies too much on atomic power? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using atomic power? What other sources of energy would be preferable and why? Would you oppose having an atomic power plant built in your area--or a plant to dispose of radioactive materials?

In the final stage of the Second World War in 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima on August 6th and on Nagasaki on August 9th. Both cities were thoroughly devastated and many lives were lost. The United States would say that it was the least objectionable choice to bring an end to the war, but we cannot deny that

it instilled in us a strong resentment and indignation against atomic weapons.

The Japanese constitution of 1947 contains the renunciation of war clause in Article 9 and laws limit the use of atomic energy to peaceful purposes. Consequently, the Basic Law concerning Atomic Energy contains the three principles that nuclear research, development and utilization will be for peaceful purposes only, that there will be full public disclosure, and that its administration will be autonomous and democratic.

Before the war, Japan largely depended on hydroelectric power. I remember many somewhat sad stories about villagers who had to leave their homes because of the construction of dams in the mountains. Personally, I remember with joy the thrill of seeing a powerhouse from a train window while traveling through a mountainous area when I was a child. The powerhouse in a deep valley with two large concrete pipes rising up to the top of the mountain looked quite spectacular in the green woods.

The situation changed. After the end of the war, especially after 1960, Japan entered a period of high economic growth. Iron and steel, chemicals, machinery and other heavy industries expanded rapidly. As individual incomes increased, electric appliances became common household items and the demand for electricity increased. In those days, thermal power was most popular, but in 1966, Japan's first nuclear power plant began operating.

Japan is the only country to have experienced the devastation of atomic bombs and an anti-nuclear power plant movement was prevalent in those days, but after the 1974 oil shock, the importance of the development of nuclear power came to be realized by the general public. In those days, I had a chance to look around the Tokai nuclear power plant, located by the sea. There, I saw a boiling water type of reactor, which

boiled water in the reactor core to produce steam which was transferred to the turbine generator. The radioactive waste was encased in concrete boxes and stored by the sea. I could not understand what I saw there very well, but I was deeply impressed with the sight.

Japan is a small country, poor in natural resources and her industries demand a huge amount of energy. Japan's dependence on imported energy sources rose rapidly and is now about 90 percent. Statistics show that in Japan, energy sources that generate electric power are: oil 32%, natural gas 19%, coal 14%, nuclear power 24% and others (including hydroelectric power) 11%. As for nuclear energy in 1990, Japan had the fourth largest capacity in the world, after the United States, France and the U. S. S. R. In 1990, Japan had 39 reactors and plans to construct additional reactors. Consequently, anti-nuclear movements concerning the location of such reactors, especially in regard to safety measures relating to strong earthquakes and the disposal of radioactive waste products, have had wide support. It is quite regrettable that in some plants accidents which might have caused serious disasters were slyly concealed to avoid outside inspection. We should not forget the catastrophe in 1986 at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the U. S. S. R.

We Japanese cannot forget the annihilation caused by the atomic bombs and have been reluctant to receive nuclear power as an energy resource, but we should realize the situation and try to use energy more efficiently and not to waste it in any aspect of our lives. Today, the amount of hydroelectric power is comparatively low and geothermal energy, solar power and wind power are still unable to satisfy our demand. (MICHIKO KAWAMURA, Meguro, Tokyo)

The more convenient our daily lives become, the more energy we use. As our

energy consumption is represented by electric power, here I will note how we consume electricity. In my boyhood, it may have been enough to use only electric lamps and a radio in our home. Now we usually have a television set, a refrigerator, a video and so on. School children think it natural to use an electric pencil sharpener. Use of air-conditioners is also very common today. In August, the consumption of electric power peaks because people watch high school baseball matches on television while drinking cool drinks in a cool room. It is easy to say that this kind of life is luxurious, but it is very difficult for us to go back to the former life.

So far as we accept our present life, we must obtain the necessary energy for it. When we examine the source of energy (electricity) statistically, petroleum still is at the top (about half of the total), followed by coal, natural gas, atomic energy and water power in that order. Concerning petroleum, we must import all of it from other countries. From a common sense standpoint, water power is thought most suitable in our country because it causes no environmental pollution. But we cannot construct so many dams in the country because our country is very small. Thus, nuclear power generation is an attractive goal we should aim at. I experienced the great destructive power of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and I thought then that if the energy were used in a constructive way, it could be a great boon.

Nuclear power generation is a system of generating electric power by utilizing thermal energy which is produced by nuclear fission. If this method is promoted without any trouble, it will enhance the welfare of human beings. To our great regret, however, there have been many serious accidents at nuclear power plants, both foreign and domestic. The most serious one was at the Chernobyl plant in the Soviet Union. The acci-

dent at the Monju plant in Tsuruga, Fukui is fresh in our memory. Though nuclear power generation involves a risk, still we should promote the system, because it is the most suitable way of getting energy in our country where we lack natural resources. The cost of construction of a nuclear power plant is rather high compared to other plants which consume petroleum or coal, but fuel expenses for nuclear power plants prove to be economical because we can get enormous energy from a little bit of nuclear fuel. Therefore the cost of production of electric power in the case of nuclear fuel is comparatively low when the price of crude petroleum is high as at the time after the so-called "oil shock".

Now that it is impossible for us to cut our connection with modern conveniences supported by electric power, we must produce the energy by freely using every possible way. Some people are opposed to the construction of nuclear power plants while consuming much electric power for their daily luxurious lives. They should notice the contradiction. (**MIHIKO YOSHIMOTO**, Gifu)

I remember the frightening event of the atomic bomb during the Second World War. I did not know about atomic power until the time when it destroyed two Japanese cities. Now, I know a little more than before. Atomic power may be important for us to live a useful life. Perhaps we cannot live without it now. Therefore, we must not forget its awesome power and take care not to overlook its dangers. We are apt to ignore a little accident as unimportant, but we must remember its great power.

I want to emphasize this point for those who have some relation to the Atomic Energy Act. On the other hand, we must be concerned not only about atomic energy but about economically using all things. Nothing is inexhausti-

ble. Those of us now living must think about our descendants.

(**MICHIKO SANO**, Minami, Nagoya)

Many things have been invented by human beings. Most of them are useful for our lives, but others are not. Dynamite, for example, was first used in a helpful way, but when used for a bomb, it became harmful. Dr. Nobel, who invented dynamite, left his inheritance to be used for prizes, including the Nobel Peace Prize, for outstanding achievers in certain areas.

Speaking of atomic energy, it was originally developed for the purpose of creating an atomic bomb during wartime when an abnormal atmosphere prevailed throughout the world. At that time, an atomic bomb might have been considered reasonable under such abnormal circumstances, but its use should not even be dreamed of in the peaceful atmosphere of today. Due to the fact that atomic bombs were dropped on two Japanese cities, Japanese people in general cannot forget the dreadful images of those events, which will be conveyed to their descendants forever.

Even in peacetime, when people generally recover a sane way of thinking, some people may insanely consider using atomic bombs. Such people must be silenced by the cooperative movements of conscientious people. In order to avoid the use of atomic bombs, constant, careful observation is necessary, but the most important thing is to lead people away from such dangerous thinking even if it takes a long time.

(**HARUJI FUKUMI**, Minami, Nagoya)

I am surprised to learn that atomic power accounts for more than one-third of the total electric power now used in Japan. It has been my unsupported assumption that it accounted for no more than twenty percent at the most, so one-

third is too much in relation to my vague supposition

Atomic energy was first introduced as a supplement to petroleum energy which had it been feared would become exhausted in the near future. I hear that only one gram of uranium can produce a great amount of energy equivalent to no less than 2000 kiloliters of oil. But it has the fatal disadvantage of producing nuclear waste which cannot be disposed of effectively even by the latest advances in modern technology. It is commonly said that we live in a nuclear age, but that is not correct as long as we have yet to do away with nuclear waste. In my view, the use of any source of energy is complete only when disposal of the waste material involved leaves no problem. Indeed, the disposal of nuclear waste has issued a great challenge to the world. The discharge of untreated nuclear waste should constitute a sinful misuse of a valuable resource of energy. As long as there is no way of using nuclear energy without discharging its waste untreated, we have no alternative but to use it as little as possible.

Come to think of it, we should ask our descendants if they will allow us to use nuclear energy to sustain the current level of civilized life. How much, if any, would they allow? What if they do not approve? We should disdain to use nuclear energy without effectively disposing of its waste. I wonder if the 21st century can solve this self-imposed dilemma of mankind.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

August 5 Message (Subject #331)

Since Japan is an island country surrounded by the sea, it is natural that fish have become an important element in the Japanese diet. Many kinds of fish

are available in fish markets and supermarkets. Some fish are used for the sashimi raw fish slices in sushi. It is interesting that, traditionally in Japan, the eating of fish meat was acceptable but the eating of the meat of four-footed animals was not. Whether meat comes from a beast, a bird or a fish, however, a living creature is killed to provide food for human beings. The final theme suggested for an essay for the next issue of "Daily Word" Echoes is: "Fish". Have you ever gone fishing? Do you like fish? Do you enjoy watching living fish as well as eating the meat of dead ones? You may write about any experiences or thoughts you have related to fish.

I have never gone fishing, whether in a boat or from the seaside because I am a woman and, previously, Japanese women did not have the hobby of fishing. For me, another reason is that I do not like to eat fish nor do I like their smell. I once went to the Nagoya Aquarium as a guide for a friend and watched living fish, but I disliked the fish smell and never went back again.

I used to eat fish when I was young. I lived in Hamamatsu at that time. A fish seller came every morning calling out "Fresh fish" which were caught early in the morning. They were very tasty. I am sorry that I cannot find tasty ones now and have become a woman who does not like fish.

Recently, I had two experiences related to horse mackerels on the Bôso Peninsula. I had presumed that horse mackerel were not tasty, but these were really good. One was sliced raw and the other was deep fried. Both of them were caught in the morning and I ate them in the morning.

Now, I have a question for myself. I do not think I live luxuriously, so why do

I say I do not like fish? Do I like fish or not? I cannot answer exactly.

(MICHIKO SANDO, Minami, Nagoya)

Since I was raised in a small town with a tiny fishing port in Mie Prefecture, fish were familiar to me in my boyhood. I used to see dorados with bright yellow and sky-blue colors or sun-fish in queer shapes, which were on sale at the fish market. In my hometown, there was a large catch of bonitos every year, so processing foodstuffs from bonitos, like dried bonito bars, is a major industry of that town. At times, sharks are caught and become the raw material for *kamaboko* or *chikuwa* (boiled fish paste). My hometown of Daiô-chô features salted guts of bonitos which we call *katsuo-no-shiokara*. They are quite delicious despite their characteristic smell. I hear that there is also a similar fermented food like *kusaya* in some parts of Southeast Asia.

In those days, when I lived in the country, there were no supermarkets, so we bought food at a small grocery store or from peddlers. We often bought mackerel pike (*sanma*) or horse mackerel (*aji*) and, in winter, raw oysters from one of those peddlers because there was an oyster farm in the vicinity of our town. My father, who died last November at the age of 86, loved *sashimi* (raw fish slices). His favorite cuisine, other than *sashimi*, was herring eggs dressed with mayonnaise.

During this Bon Festival, which is celebrated from August 13-15, we are going to observe several rituals for the deceased. On the morning of August 14, religious services are held at the Buddhist temple we belong to. In the evening, we will join in a special gathering held on the seashore called *kasabuku*, which has been handed down from ancient times. At that time, each household which had a family member who died during the previous year occupies a

certain space of a square to erect a parasol decorated with many small articles which belonged to the person who died. Relatives and friends circle around an altar by turns, carrying this parasol. In this way, we comfort the spirit of the deceased. On the following day, the spirits return to the cemetery and the Bon Festival is concluded.

As noted in the message, Japan is surrounded by the ocean. We benefit greatly from the sea. We ought to preserve the marine resources so that all inhabitants can make use of the sea products. I do not want to see the day when we are banned from eating raw fish due to polluted sea water, because I am also a raw fish fan like my father.

(SHOJI DOMAE, Kasugai)

My favorite restaurant is a certain *sushi-ya* in Gifu, which I visit very often. Whenever my wife asks me where I want to go for the celebration of my birthday, for example, I tell her the name of the *sushi-ya* without fail. At the *sushi-ya* I order many kinds of raw fish without rice as an accompaniment to sake. I prefer fish to animal meat as most Japanese older folk do. This is, as Dr. Offner mentioned, because our country is surrounded by sea and we have lived on fish as our protein nutrients for a long time.

It was at the beginning of Meiji that people began to eat four-footed animals. Before that, people usually ate fish as subsidiary food. This custom may have been influenced by Buddhism. People partook of whales as food, however, because they did not know that whales are mammals. By the way, I cannot understand Westerners' argument against our habit of eating whales. They insist that whales should not be eaten because they have high intellectual power. Then, are people allowed to eat cows which have low intelligence? From our traditional point of view, it seems much more savage to eat four-footed animals. This is,

after all, a difference of culture. People should not easily criticize the cultures of other nations, including their manner of life. Once a prime minister of Japan was frowned upon for saying that there are still many Chinese who are living in caves. In certain cases, life in a cave is more cultured than life in a small wooden house. Therefore, these two styles of life cannot and should not be compared at all.

Once I heard that Germans know very few names of fish because it is not their custom to eat much fish. I think this is common for nations which eat more meat of four-footed animals than that of fish. In our language, the names of some fish changes according to their stage of growth. For example, the name of *bora* (a striped mullet) changes from *subashi-ri* to *ina* to *bora* to *todo* as it grows. This is because people, mainly fishermen, needed to distinguish the fish in each stage. Westerners give distinct names to the meat of different animals, such as beef, pork, mutton, and so on. In Japanese, we must attach the name of the animal, such as *ushi-no-niku* or *buta-niku* to distinguish them. I think this is a very interesting cultural trait.

We import much fish from other countries today even though we are surrounded by sea. One reason is that the catch of fish is decreasing year after year in our neighboring waters, and another reason is that our catch is restricted by international treaties. There is a large fish market in Tsukiji, Tokyo. Originally, it was a market to handle the enormous volume of fish from adjoining seas for Edo citizens. Today, most of the fish available there come from the four corners of the world. There is no longer a clear reason why the Tsukiji market should remain there. It is sad that we have to eat fish coming from the other side of the globe even though we live in an island country.

(MIKIHiko YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

Recently, I rarely see fishermen and I myself have no chance to go fishing. When I was young, I often went fishing. Now, I have two clear memories about fishing: one when I went fishing for fun and the other when I was obliged to go.

When I was in middle school, I used to go fishing with my friends, riding our bicycles to a river in the country. I used angleworms as bait. The fish I caught and brought home were boiled in soy and served as a side dish.

Another memory is of offshore fishing off the coast of Tokoname City where I worked in the Financial Department of a ceramic producing company. In the summer, we invited some key men from banks and securities companies to enjoy offshore fishing. We left the Tokoname beach early in the morning aboard an engine-powered fishing boat. After about forty minutes, the boat stopped and we began to fish. At the same time, I began to suffer seasickness and felt miserable for about three hours. Many kinds of fish were caught and it must have been great fun for the others. When the fish were few in one place, we moved to another place where there were more.

In due course, a large airport will be built off the shore of Tokoname. Then the fish will escape to distant places to avoid the noise caused by the big planes.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

It has been customary for me to eat fish at breakfast. Please don't jump to the conclusion that I am a whale. Instead, you should first ask me the size of the fish I take during the meal. Each one of them is approximately one centimeter long. I take them with graded radish. This is one of my favorite dishes at breakfast.

We cannot live on air. We are destined to eat living things—plants or animals—to sustain our own lives. To be more exact, other living organisms on

earth permit—human beings to live by providing them food at the cost of their own life. We should be profoundly grateful to these organisms for letting us live.

Saying grace before meals is a common practice. But we had better think once in a while why we continue such a practice at every meal. No one can ignore a great blessing from heaven.

(**SHOJI SUGIMOTO**, Suginami, Tokyo)

Essays written on theme of March
22, 1997 Meeting:

Memories of Elementary School Days

Three years ago I composed an essay on this theme (Subject #260) in which I described my boyhood, deeply concerned about the war, so I will write something different here, avoiding duplication.

I entered an elementary school in Meguro, Tokyo in 1939. I was born in Azabu-ku, the center of the metropolis, but moved to Meguro just before entering school because of my father's business failure. It was only five years after the school was established that I entered it. In those days, the area was just changing from a farming village to a town and our school was established as a result of the rapid increase in population of that area. By the way, it was just in the year of my birth that Meguro was merged into Tokyo as a ward.

In those days, at the beginning of the Showa era, Meguro was still a rural district. The area was at the edge of Musashino (a great field) and was in the bosom of nature. The school song proudly extolled its fine surroundings. The schoolhouse was encircled by rice fields and we could hear frogs croaking in sum-

mer and insects singing in autumn. As there were no tall buildings in the neighborhood, we could see Mt. Fuji from the school yard on clear days.

When I was a fifth grader, I was evacuated to Hiroshima as I have often noted previously in this periodical. Most of my classmates who had no relatives in the country were evacuated in a group to Yamanashi Prefecture a little after I left. Two close friends saw me off at Shinagawa Station and gave me a book to read on the train. Less than two years later, our schoolhouse was destroyed in the flames of war and some friends lost homes and families during their absence.

About ten years after the war, I visited Tokyo for the first time and was able to meet my old friends after a long separation. I also visited my alma mater and was disheartened at the completely changed state of the school. The old schoolhouse had burned down and a temporary building had been erected on the site. What reminded me of the past was only a wisteria trellis at the corner of the playground and the swimming pool which had escaped damage. I visited the teachers' room and asked to see a list of graduates, in which I found names of my friends and also my brother's name (who had been treated as "missing"). Afterward, my friends began to invite me to alumni meetings.

Some years ago, a graduation ceremony for our grade was held at our alma mater. My classmates had graduated from the elementary school in March 1945, just after the great air raid on Tokyo and could not experience a regular graduation ceremony. Owing to the efforts of classmates and the school authorities, a dream-like ceremony was realized after the lapse of half a century. I was also invited to attend despite the fact that I am not a formal graduate. When I received a diploma from the incumbent schoolmaster, who was younger than us, I felt a lump in my throat real-

izing that we had lived through a severe wartime trial. Now I often visit that alma mater when I have spare time in Tokyo and make it a rule to stand still for a while remembering the past.

(MIKIHiko YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

I changed elementary schools three times due to my father's changed assignments. I attended four elementary schools but went back to Hamamatsu, where my grandfather lived, during holidays. I still love Hamamatsu now. My last elementary school was in Hamamatsu and, fortunately, I was able to graduate from high school there.

I wanted to meet elementary school classmates in Hamamatsu last year and made a plan to do so by myself. Indeed, the plan succeeded. We were very happy to see each other and decided to meet once every year. We talked about our memories and felt that we had become young again. It was a long time since we had seen each other. For one, it was the first meeting since graduation, but we could understand each others thoughts. There were not so many words, but warm eyes. I deeply felt that our hearts had grown along with our years which had been given us by God.

(MICHIKO SANDO, Minami, Nagoya)

August 8 Message

On August 8th, two days after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, after denouncing the neutrality pact it had signed four years earlier. Japan had already lost the war, so the Soviet declaration did not influence the outcome of the war, but it did result in its obtaining Japanese territory which Russia still occupies, which is the reason a peace treaty between the two countries has still not been signed.

Today one of my students at the NHK Culture Center mentioned listening to the message regarding the Soviet Declaration, so I asked the whole class to join me in reading aloud the text for today and then translated it into Japanese for them. After reading it, I felt like writing about that gigantic, complicated country.

In an NHK commentary, Mr. Hakamada of Aoyama Gakuin University, an expert on Russia, said that we tend to think Russia has gone from bad to worse after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but that the chaotic situation there is quite "normal". This analysis was quite new to me.

I can vividly remember talking with colleagues at Chigusa High School about the hopeful signs of peace coming soon after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, but contrary to our expectations, the world moved in an unpredictable direction. Not only in communist countries, but systems in capitalist countries have also broken down. Consider Japanese politics, for example. I do not understand what is going on and the birth of one new party after another does not interest me at all for few if any politicians seem to care about the welfare of the nation.

Despite this discouraging situation, however, I'd like to see if there is anything I can do for society. Mr. Hakamada noted that the most serious problem in present-day Russia is the lack of well-educated, middle-class citizens, while the majority of Japanese citizens are "well-educated". I was happy to hear this, but I am also worried about the decreasing number of young people who can think on their own. So here is the place, I believe I can contribute to Japanese society in a small way—by helping people to write in English. Tonight I introduced "Daily Word" Echoes to my class and encouraged them to write their own essays in English.

(TOMOYASU KIMURA, Nishi, Nagoya)