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Discussion after the Speech of Tetsuo Kasuya

Discussion

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Discussion After the Speech of Tetsuo Kasuya

QUESTION, Professor King: Thank you very much, Mr. Kasuya. I have one question that came up when I was chairman of the International Council of the American Management Association. I remember very distinctly a president of a manufacturing company in Massachusetts coming in with the report on doing business in Japan and being concerned about getting on the qualified supplier list. He felt there was some tendency to favor indigenous suppliers.

I do not know whether or not there is anything that can be done about it. You would have any comments on it?

ANSWER, Mr. Kasuya: What Professor King is saying is partly correct. These big organizations similar, for example, to AT&T Company make it a point that they import at least ten percent of their procurement from the United States.

QUESTION, Mr. Wetston: What is the reason why Japan has recently decided to open its doors to foreign bidders in its construction industry? Also, why is the Japan stock exchange, the NIKO, doing so well?

ANSWER, Mr. Kasuya: Japan is changing all of a sudden because of pressure. Japan is very, very subject to external pressure. As for the stock market, Japan has now affluence of money. You will be surprised how rich they are. They do not use, they just save, so they have no place to go except to the stock market.

QUESTION, Mr. Bartram: I am curious. You did not mention in your comments the question of language. I compliment you on your ability to use English. Surely one of the big barriers for any westerner going into Japan is the question of our inability to speak Japanese, whereas the Japanese are learning English and other western languages at an increasing rate?

ANSWER, Mr. Kasuya: Personally, I think Americans are much better in learning Japanese. If an American studied intensively for three, four months, the basics would be mastered. My study of English has gone on about forty years, but it is still this bad. Americans who learn Japanese can speak very fluently, yet Japanese grammar is so complicated.

QUESTION, Mr. Kirby: Could you comment on how you see the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States? We have heard before that the Japanese are concerned about this.

ANSWER, Mr. Kasuya: I am not an expert, but the Japanese Government is very worried about foreign countries forming bloc economies,

and they have some fear of being excluded, but I welcome that move personally.

QUESTION, Mr. Bertrand: Americans, and to a certain extent Canadians, are bragging that they are making real efforts to penetrate the Japanese market. My question is very simple. Are we working in the right direction? Are we progressing? Have we missed the point? I understood your comments and your recommendations, but do you think that we are progressing so that we will arrive?

ANSWER, Mr. Kasuya: The more I know about America the more I realize the cultural differences between it and Japan. For example, we have no product liability. The Japanese are not living in the world of freedom. I am free, but there is a concept of freedom that is completely different in America. It is the concept of profit or money. I do not know how much my income is, or how much tax I am paying. Thus I am very indifferent to that kind of freedom.

I think Japan the country is very easy to penetrate but the cultural program is hard to penetrate. Many Americans think geocentrically: "I know what I am doing is correct."

QUESTION, Mr. Stayin: There is sort of an extraordinary event that has occurred in Washington with our new Secretary of Commerce in that he has gone out and virtually invited the automobile industry to file anti-dumping cases against Japanese and Korean automobile manufacturers. Normally the private sector is beseeching the Department of Commerce and the International Trade Commission. How do you react to this extraordinary action?

ANSWER, Mr. Kasuya: If I were American, I would have taken same measure, and some Japanese argue about how generous Americans are, but as businesspersons we cannot speak for the Americans. The American culture is so diversified, some of which are very radical, some others which are so generous. We see these dichotomies come up from time to time.

COMMENT, Professor King: It has been a rich experience to hear you today. Thank you very much and we have much to learn, too. I think that this is going to live in our memories for some time. Thank you very much for being here.