

Tetsuro NAKAOKA: *Ningen to Rodo no Mirai*
(the future of man and labor—what can be expected
from technological progress?—)
Chuokoron 1970, 214 pp.

I doubt that there is a single person today capable of presenting a clear and convincing vision for the future structure of human society. In this respect the author of the book on the future of man and labor is honest. Let us discuss some of the valuable suggestions that I have drawn from this book.

Quoting Rousseau's *Emile*, Nakaoka says that craftsman before the Industrial Revolution—before the Meiji period in Japan—"could, no matter where he was, pack up his belonging in a bag and leave his workshop, relying on his own two hands, should he be subjected to persecution." At the end of the book Nakaoka writes "I may just be dreaming of a modern version of the old freedom 'to pack up one's bags and leave, relying on one's own two hands'."

My (the present writer's) dream is more heroic. For the past ten years I have advocated a political philosophy which I termed peaceful coexistencialism. In my opinion, progressive forces in Japan should have anticipated such international political developments as West Germany's diplomatic stance and the policy of the Italian and Canadian governments of recognizing China long before Japan's anti-Communist government took the political advantage by recognizing China last year.

The vital point of my philosophy stems from the idea that the best way to a truly bright future for mankind is to assure "the freedom to leave (his country), relying on his own two hands" for every ordinary man (or woman), not only for one who lives in such a devided country as Germany or Korea." The above freedom had been assured for a few outstanding artists, technologists, and thinkers in various countries since times past, and they often forced to use it. These examples were China's Confucius in the 6th century B.C., Anaxagoras and young Plato of ancient Greece, Avicenna and Ibn Khaldūn of medieval Islam, and Leonardo da Vinci of the Renaissance period. Even today such freedom is still assured only for outstanding artists, scientists, and engineers outside the communist countries.

In order to popularize such freedom for ordinary men and women, two different types of national state will be necessary for each area (nation), where the same native language is spoken and the similar social customs are used. One is the non-Stalinist communist state, and the other is the reformed capitalist

state. It is my belief that only through such freedom will it be possible for every government which presently exists on the earth to get away from the internal corruption and rigidity. Moreover, I believe that without such freedom it would be difficult to discover and create the third and truly new form of democratic society for the future of mankind.

Getting back to the book on the future of man and labor, the author says that Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Marx all considered "labor" to be indispensable to man's truly human life and self formation (self taught) and that what they had in mind by the word "labor" was that of craftsman. Nakaoka himself regards the labor of craftsman as the desirable prototype of free human labor in the future ideal society. He also says that in today's highly industrialized society only the labor of higher personnels in big business or higher staffs of large research institutes contains the same flavor of craftsman's. In his words, "the greater portion of their work is still based on their personal training and experience."

But the author also says "although such labor of modern elite craftsman is undoubtedly enjoyable for himself, the greater part of his enjoyment lies in his advantageous position to do something big by using the power of organization and at the same time extend his own ability. Thus he completely confuses the power of organization with his own personal ability. As a result, Nakaoka emphasizes, the world of businessmen and even that of scientific researchers, nowadays, are becoming similar to the medieval Church in terms of the enormous organization with the wide and strong power. The way of thinking of the managerial or administrative staffs within such organization also seems to be approaching to that of the medieval church people.

The author focuses attention on the fact that this trend is no longer confined to the capitalist system alone. While pointing out that modern capitalism's slogan of "separation of management and ownership (separation of manager and capitalist)" has brought no improvement in the situation whatsoever, he also points out the fact that in the communist countries only a few administrative staffs are controlling people under the name of the whole workers. Furthermore he says that even the triple union of workers, engineers, and managers that was promoted during the Great Cultural Revolution in China, would include in itself the danger of gradual deterioration to a medieval type of mechanism in the near future, although he highly evaluates the recent achievement of the tripple union.

Thus, sympathizing with the ideal future society of which Marx dreamed—ownership of all means of production by the commune and the cooperative labor of all the people—the author reveals his doubts whether this ideal society could be realized in some days.

Now, we should ask the question: Can the future world be better than such as predicted by some sociologists that "a few elite will get busier and the masses will have more and more leisure time."

The actual situation in Japan is still a long way off from a society in which the masses have more free time than they can know what to do with. The vast majority of Japanese are driven by computer systems and other machine systems to which they are forced to adjust themselves physically and mentally. Another thing worthy of attention is that because of the development of the socioeconomic machinery which controls the above systems, interpersonal relations both at work and at leisure are increasingly indirect by the machines interposed between man and man, and people are coming increasingly under the illusion that they are controlled by the machines when they are actually controlled by other men.

This book seems to be colored to some extent by the above illusion. I think such illusion should be superseded by the analysis of concepts of technology that has been developed by Prof. M. Taketani and his school. According to his viewpoint, in short, technology consists not in the systems of machines composing the means of production, but in the man who consciously applies some objective law of nature to productive purposes. This book, however, does reflect very well one side of actual world in which not only the common people but even the top level managers or administrators in big business or government in a highly industrialized country are being controlled by the social machinery itself rather than the latter being controlled by the former.

Nakaoka says that in order to get out from this unhappy situation for human beings, labor unions should make much more effort to transform the labor of workers into more stimulative one designed to "develop basic human abilities" of the workers themselves. In order to achieve such transformation, they should win much more discretionary power concerning the processes of work in their factory or office, as well as more right to participate in management. To win these power and right, it would be necessary for common workers in any factory or office to join into the civil movements for social welfare in the local community where they live, and also to cooperate with understanding members in the technical or administrative staff of the organization in which they are employed. In these points, I agree with the author of this book whole-heartedly.

YASUO SHIZUME (Science writer)