

Japan's Post-War Recovery

Homer's farewell address upon leaving Japan in 1950
(delivered in Japanese)

It is natural that, when one comes to the end of one phase of his life, he stops to look back and reconsider the past before he turns his face to the future. I should like to tell you of some of the thoughts that come to my mind as I think back over the past three and one-half years.

During the time that I have lived in Japan, I have received many impressions. But the thing that stands out the clearest in my mind is the difference between the Japan of 1947 and the Japan of 1950.

The country soon after the war was something like a flower whose stem was broken. The flower laid in the dirt, it had lost its color, and it was withering. The ground around the flower was dry and contaminated with poisons that gave the plant no life-saving sustenance.

But soon the situation was changed. The bad soil was dug up and done away with. A new foundation was laid. This one was composed only of pure, wholesome, invigorating substances. And the flower, because it inherently is strong and healthy, responded to this treatment. Where before it was broken and lifeless, now it stands upright and firm, and it is radiant. This is the flower of the Japan of 1950.

Who was the gardener who made this magic? To whom must thanks be given that the flower lives today and will live for many centuries yet to come? The Master Gardener was none other than the Japanese people themselves. It was their own work, your own work and devotion, that has brought about the marvelous transformation that has occurred during these past few years.

It will always be a matter of great joy to me that it has been possible for me to have been so intimately associated with you and others in Japan who have brought about this miracle. The impressions and the influences that Japan has given me will remain with me always. The friendships that I have made here, especially in the communications industry, will be enduring ones.

One of the saddest and most difficult things in life is for friends to say goodbye. It is often said that when friends part, each leaves a little bit of himself with the others. There will be much of you that I will have to cherish. And, when I leave, there will be much of myself that will yet remain in Japan.



Homer with Seigi Tanaka, his daughter Michiko, and Konosuke Matsushita, founder of Matsushita Electric Company (Panasonic). Tokyo, Japan; June 1947