

***Human Development and International
Research Cooperation
for the 21st Century***

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Up to now, the general understanding in Japan has been that activities in the public interest should be administered by government. Recently, however, the private sector has begun to realize that it, too, has a role to play. Moreover, accompanying Japan's economic growth has come an era in which philanthropic activities are thought of in international terms. Yet neither of these changes has been absorbed sufficiently. It could perhaps be said that Japan still has a lot to learn.

Established in 1974, the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA), provides grants to assist research that is difficult to carry out within the funding structure of usual government or corporate research programs, as well as conducts its own research activities. NIRA's research projects focus on how Japan should approach the twenty-first century in light of the major changes taking place in Japanese industry, politics, and society, and the extreme importance of the "internationalization" of the nation.

More specifically, emphasis has been placed on international research cooperation and the promotion of joint research activities, with subjects such as international industrial cooperation, industrial restructuring in advanced nations, and the problem of population growth in Asia.

Through such research, the issue has surfaced of how

scientific and technological progress should be handled, a problem which faces the entire earth. Indeed, since the industrial revolution, the science and technology of the twentieth century have on the one hand led to the unification of the earth into a so-called global village, while on the other hand provided the means to destroy the human race.

In the midst of these circumstances, what can bring a semblance of order to the twenty-first century? Military power will certainly not do so. Nor is any new method being offered. Then how shall we go forward?

First comes education. Although education may be the primary responsibility of the government of a particular country, Japan should assume a special role in supporting educational efforts to create a better future world. Since Japan has benefitted from the foundations and educational system of the United States and Europe, now it should help the students and young scholars of the Third World.

Next in importance is the promotion of intellectual exchanges and policy-oriented research. This includes, especially, cooperative investigations, research and symposia among various countries. If the national budget or university budgets are decreased, it is sometimes the case that these areas are the first to be cut back. I think that these activities must be supported, even if only partially.

On reflection, I feel that Japanese philanthropic activities are moving in the direction of such international cooperation. At the same time that Japan is learning from the experiences of European and American foundations, I am concerned about the extent to which Japan can make its own contribution to the creation of a new international society. Finally, I hope that the Japanese government will show its deep concern and formulate policies to promote private philanthropy.