

# Cultural Conflicts

## Case Studies in a World of Change

**Edward Lerner**

Samples are provided for evaluation purposes. Copying of the product or its parts  
for resale is prohibited. Additional restrictions may be set by the publisher.

J. WESTON  
**WALCH**  
PUBLISHER

## User's Guide to *Our Reproducible Books*

As part of our general effort to provide educational materials which are as practical and economical as possible, we have designated this publication a “reproducible book.” The designation means that purchase of the book includes purchase of the right to limited reproduction of all pages on which this symbol appears:

### **Repro**

Here is the basic policy: We grant to individual purchasers of this book the right to make sufficient copies of reproducible pages for use by all students of a single teacher. This permission is limited to a single teacher, and does not apply to entire schools or school systems, so institutions purchasing the book should pass the permission on to a single teacher. Copying of the book or its parts for resale is prohibited.

Any questions regarding this policy or requests to purchase further reproduction rights should be addressed to:

Permissions Editor  
J. Weston Walch, Publisher  
10200 Jefferson Blvd.  
Culver City, CA 90232

*Cover Photo: © Alain Le Garsmeur/Tony Stone Worldwide  
Workers' houses in Fushua, Liaoning Province, China*

ISBN 978-0-8251-2605-5

Copyright © 1986, 1994  
J. Weston Walch, Publisher  
10200 Jefferson Blvd. • Culver City, CA 90232  
[www.socialstudies.com/walch](http://www.socialstudies.com/walch)

Printed in the United States of America

---

# Contents

---

<i>Foreword to the Revised Edition</i> .....	<i>v</i>
<i>Foreword to the Original Edition</i> .....	<i>vii</i>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	<i>ix</i>
<i>Recommended Teacher Readings</i> .....	<i>xi</i>
<i>How to Use the Cases</i> .....	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Case Studies</i> .....	<i>1</i>
<b>JAPAN</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>CHINA</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>INDIA</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>SOUTHEAST ASIA</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>RUSSIA AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES</b> 49	
<b>WESTERN EUROPE</b> .....	<b>63</b>
<b>NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST</b> .....	<b>73</b>
<b>AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>SOUTH AMERICA</b> .....	<b>95</b>
<b>CENTRAL AMERICA</b> .....	<b>105</b>
<b>CANADA</b> .....	<b>115</b>
<b>UNITED STATES OF AMERICA</b> .....	<b>125</b>
Japan .....	3

China ..... 15

India ..... 29

Southeast Asia ..... 39

Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States ..... 49

Western Europe ..... 63

North Africa and the Middle East ..... 73

Africa South of the Sahara ..... 85

South America ..... 95

Central America ..... 105

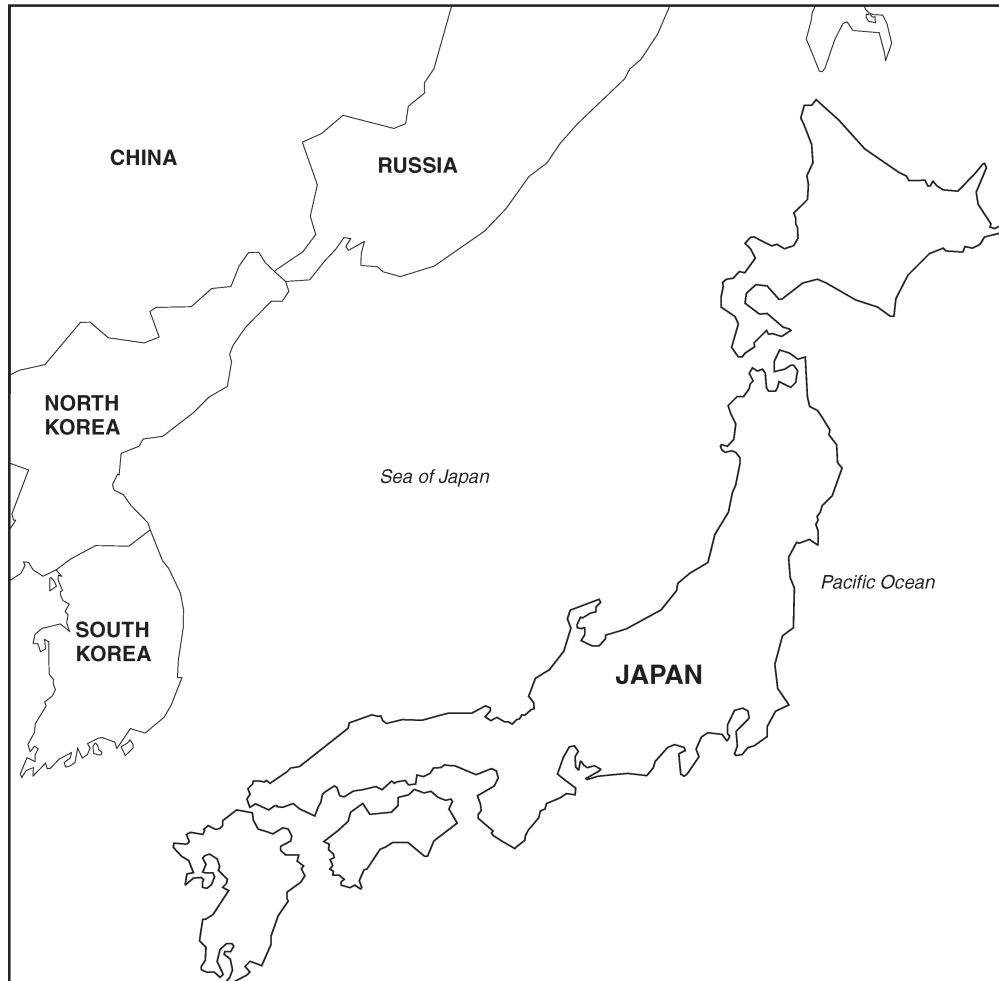
Canada ..... 115

United States of America ..... 125

---

# JAPAN

## Individualism Versus Corporate Life



---

## BACKGROUND

The spectacular achievements of Japan's "company system" and the distinctive personal life it creates have captured the interest of many writers, particularly Americans. The search for explanations of Japanese industrial performance in competition with the United States has led us to examine and evaluate Japanese methods. This simulation presents a Japanese man evaluating the system's impact upon himself. To present a viewpoint that is easier for our students to handle, the Japanese protagonist has been given exposure to American values against which to measure his own experiences. With the increased involvement of Japanese experts in their companies' activities in the United States, this is not unrealistic.

Some of the specifics offered in the simulation—e.g., the daily performance of the company song by the assembled employees of Matsushita—may be hard for American students to accept. You might, therefore, want to show one of the number of educational videos on contemporary Japan that include such sequences. Two possibilities are: *Two Factories: Japan and America*, LCA Films, 1974, 22 minutes; *The Human Face of Japan: Lifetime Employment*, LCA Films, 1982, 28 minutes.

Although few industrialized societies have attempted to copy the Japanese company system, it might be interesting to consider the system's potential. Students might discuss whether some aspects of the Japanese model would be useful for American application.

---

## SCENARIO

Hiroshi Tashino is a computer engineer for the Fujitsu Corporation, a major Japanese manufacturer of computer equipment. He has been working for the company for fifteen years, ever since his graduation from Tokyo University. He and his wife now have two children. His career has been quite successful, and he has had a number of promotions.

He has recently returned to Japan from a year in the United States, where he was in Fujitsu's California office. While in the United States, he thought up a new system for creating computer programs.

Hiroshi has tried to interest his company in his new idea but has been turned down. He still believes it is a good concept; he is thinking of leaving Fujitsu and starting his own small company to implement his ideas.

Because company loyalty is very strong in Japan, Hiroshi wants to talk to friends and relatives before making his decision.

---

## HIROSHI TASHINO

Although you had not been especially unhappy with Fujitsu, you now are interested in going out on your own. You were very impressed by the booming electronics companies you saw in California's "Silicon Valley"—the center of the computer research industry—that had been started by engineers who left big corporations.

Fujitsu's decision to turn down your proposal was a great disappointment. In traditional fashion, a number of company officials met with you to try to convince you that your concept would not fit well into the company's plans. They assumed you were still committed to what is best for the corporation.

You do feel gratitude to the company for all its support. Your life has been heavily involved with Fujitsu. It has arranged the financing of your house, and its employees are the people involved in nearly all of your social life.

Leaving would be quite difficult but also exciting.

---

## KIMIKO TASHINO

You are Hiroshi's wife. You have accepted the traditional role of a Japanese wife and have become involved in activities organized by the Fujitsu Corporation. You have attended classes in flower arranging and Japanese ceremonies taught by Fujitsu teachers. Most of your social events have been company-sponsored.

In California, you were particularly influenced by new friends who were Japanese-Americans. Those women picked their own activities, even though some of their husbands worked for big American computer corporations. They kept their family lives separate from their husbands' and their own employers.

That period of privacy—when everyone did not know everything you did—was enjoyable. Perhaps you can have that in Japan if Hiroshi starts his own small company.

You will suggest to Hiroshi that he leave Fujitsu.



---

## SABURO MATSUOKA

You are an engineer at the Fujitsu Corporation. You work in the same department as Hiroshi Tashino, and the two of you are friends. He has told you he might leave the company, and you are concerned.

You think it would be a mistake to leave, although you know that many people have tried their own enterprises. Recently, nearly 100,000 small companies were started by people leaving big businesses and trying to make it on their own. Most of these companies were involved in high-technology fields like computer programming.

But these small enterprises are very risky. Many fail, and none of them can guarantee the kind of lifetime security the great corporations have provided so well. A man like Hiroshi, with a wife and two children to support, should stay with the proven security of Fujitsu.

You will discourage him from taking such a risk.

---

## AKIRA TASHINO

You are Hiroshi's older brother. Since you do not have his academic talent, you did not go to a university. But you did get a good technical education. You work in the quality control department of the Matsushita Electric Corporation, which makes Panasonic appliances.

You are quite happy with your job at the huge Matsushita plant near Osaka. You live in a company apartment house. You even married your wife in the chapel at the company recreation center. The togetherness of employees is something you really enjoy.

The spirit of teamwork has been well developed at Matsushita, and you think it is the key reason for the company's success. In your quality control job, you seldom find production errors. The employees' sense of team responsibility makes their work more careful.

You believe that Fujitsu has created similar team feelings for Hiroshi, and you think it would be a mistake for him to abandon them. You will tell him so.

---

## ICHIRO TASHINO

You are Hiroshi's younger brother. When you were looking for a job, you followed the advice of your oldest brother, Akira. You joined his employer, Matsushita Electric, the company that makes Panasonic products.

As Akira promised, Matsushita supplied all of your basic needs, from a company supermarket to a company apartment house. You were delighted to have all this taken care of for you.

But that was some years ago. Now you are changing your mind. The company apartment house is cheaper than other housing, but it means you are surrounded by your co-workers at home as well as on the job. The company recreation program means that you spend your play time with the same people you work with. Your life seems very limited.

You will encourage Hiroshi to start his own company. You might even ask him if you could join him there.

---

## ETSUKO TASHINO

You are Hiroshi's sister-in-law. Your husband, Akira, has worked for a big business, the Matsushita Electric Corporation, for many years. Now that your children are older, you have also gone to work for Matsushita.

You are quite happy with the company. You are proud of the worldwide success of the Panasonic brand appliances you work on at Matsushita. It is invigorating to start each work day with your fellow employees, dressed in identical blue uniforms, as you join in singing the company song. In music, you praise the company's growth. That spirit of togetherness—of being part of a successful team—is important.

The achievements of the great Japanese corporations have earned the admiration of the world. You take special pride in noticing the groups of visitors from the United States and Europe. They come to your factory to try to understand the cause of Panasonic's accomplishments.

You know that if Hiroshi starts his own business, he will lose all these good feelings. He will soon be unhappy, and his family life will then suffer.

You will suggest that Hiroshi stay with the proven ways of the past.

---

## PATRICK MORINAGA

You are a Japanese-American from San Jose, California. You knew Hiroshi and Kimiko Tashino when they lived in the United States. Now you are visiting Japan and have come to see the Tashinos.

You are happy to hear that Hiroshi is interested in starting his own company. You always considered him unusually intelligent and creative. You suspected that his talents may have been somewhat held back by all the emphasis on group thinking and planning in Japanese corporations.

You have done very well with your own small company in California. You know a number of computer engineers who have also done well on their own. There is a constant need to make quick innovations in computer programs. This means there will always be opportunities for small companies that can go quickly from ideas to completion. Hiroshi seems well trained to do that.

You will urge Hiroshi to start out on his own. You may even suggest special arrangements with your own company.