

Editor's note

Hiroshi Kanai¹

© The Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine 2017

The island nation of Japan has built a wonderful society, culture, and academic system while coexisting harmoniously with nature over many years in an environment with abundant forests and water and considerable changes in climate from season to season. Some examples that immediately come to mind are the world-class longevity of its people, the safest society in the world, the diligence of its people and the resulting highly reliable craftsmanship, meticulous consideration for others, and the large number of Nobel Prize winners in the twenty-first century.

On the other hand, it has its share of problems such as its serious reliance on imported food and natural resources, a ballooning national debt, the massive wave of globalization to which many Japanese are resistant, a declining birth rate, and rural decline and widening disparity. Therefore, “promotion of innovation” is being strongly pushed on a national government level. A frequently cited example of innovation is Steve Jobs developing the revolutionary series of highly portable products called the iPod, iPhone, and iPad to replace the conventional desktop computer by fully utilizing the power of the Internet.

To propel such a revolution, I think it will be necessary for the Japanese population as a whole to instill in its children the desire to “change everyday life” at a young

age and to create a “culture in which people warmly watch over such challenges”, rather than concentrate on specific fields. In fact, this means changing the way we think. This will require an educational system that makes “having lively discussions” a routine part of life to “create a new vision”, rather than the current emphasis on memorization and drills.

Like Commodore Perry arriving at Japan's shores 160 years ago, the massive wave of globalization is approaching Japan from across the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan. Although the majority of Japanese may be more “stability-oriented”, they are no match for such a massive wave. There may be an even bigger wave heading Japan's way in the future. I think it is important for us to educate young people now so that they can meet the challenges posed by such social change. Therefore, it appears that we need to think seriously about what should be done at schools and at home.

In the field of medical ultrasonics, as well, we will need to fundamentally consider a strategy for countering foreign medical devices that will enter Japan atop the massive wave of globalization.

Hiroshi Kanai, Editor-in-Chief

✉ Hiroshi Kanai
kanai.hiroshi.e7@tohoku.ac.jp

¹ Graduate Schools of Engineering and Biomedical Engineering, Tohoku University, Sendai, Miyagi, Japan