

Part I

Read the passage below carefully and choose the most appropriate answers to the questions following the passage. 15%

I found the source of our trade problems with Japan.

I went shopping at the Mitsukoshi Department store and when I walked into the front door I counted 14 sales clerks in the jewelry department alone. They bowed politely and offered to help with any purchases. The American in me immediately said, "What a waste of labor! Who needs 14 sales clerks? This store needs downsizing immediately!" But that is not the Japanese instinct. And that's one reason why we have a structural trade deficit with Japan.

Let me explain: Unlike America or Western Europe, Japan long ago decided that its top priority was not to have the lowest prices for its consumers, not to have the highest dividends for its corporate shareholders, but to keep as many of its people (particularly men) employed in decent paying jobs—preferably for a lifetime with the same firm. The Japanese understand that a job gives dignity and stability to people's lives and contributes to much greater social harmony. Just walk the streets of Tokyo: few homeless sleeping on the streets, no criminals hiding in the shadows.

But to maintain such high levels of employment, to keep 14 clerks behind one store counter, Japan had to regulate its economy in a way that would protect its domestic companies from foreign competition, by controlling access to its markets. That way Japanese companies could maintain a dual price system. They could charge high prices at home, in a protected market, in order to maintain full employment, while charging lower prices abroad in order to get into everyone else's market and export like crazy.

For Japanese executives, laying off employees is the last choice they look for, not the first. Far from being rewarded for layoffs, corporate executives here are punished for them, by both peers and the press. The first priority of a Japanese company is its employees, then its customers and last its shareholders—just the opposite of the U. S. corporate mentality.

Instead of ordering massive layoffs, Japanese companies cut overtime, they freeze hiring college graduates, they freeze dividends, they offer retirement packages, they shift workers to subsidiary companies, they shift low-skilled jobs to cheaper labor markets in Asia and keep the best jobs in Japan, and they even order pay cuts for

top executives—anything but lay off people.

It is true that American workers are being hurt by unfair trade barriers erected by some foreign countries, including Japan, and the U. S. should fight hard to bring those barriers down. But the U. S. workers are being hurt just as much, if not more, by the twisted sense of priorities that now dominates the U. S. business community, where executives get bonuses for laying off employees.

Many economists argue that in an integrated global economy, Japan will have to become more like America. Its corporations will have to cut costs and downsize to remain globally competitive. Maybe they are right. The Japanese will have to become like us. But they are sure trying not to, and it's worth watching to see if they can pull it off. This is one economic war I'm hoping for Japan to win.

1. The author of this article says that America has "a structural trade deficit with Japan" because
 - (a) Americans like to buy cheaper products.
 - (b) Japanese and American corporate mentalities are different.
 - (c) most Japanese are better off than Americans.
2. Examples of the American corporate mentality include:
 - (a) rewarding executives for layoffs.
 - (b) providing lifetime careers.
 - (c) using a dual price system.
3. The highest Japanese economic priority is
 - (a) to offer consumer low prices.
 - (b) to guarantee high shareholder profits.
 - (c) to provide as many jobs as possible.
4. American workers are being hurt by
 - (a) Japanese consumers.
 - (b) American executives.
 - (c) Japanese monopoly.
5. Which of the following statements is not true?
 - (a) American workers change jobs more often than Japanese workers.
 - (b) Japanese companies will never succeed in a globally competitive economy.
 - (c) Japanese products are competitive for their low prices.

Part II

Explain in English the following three phrases so the non-Chinese people could understand the meaning of these expressions. (20-30 words each) 15%

1. 糖醋排骨
2. 壓歲錢
3. 中秋節

Part III

1. Summarize, in your own words, the main arguments in the following passage (approximately 200 to 250 words). 30%

My aunt, Mary Beton, I must tell you, died by a fall from her horse when she was riding out to take the air in Bombay. The news of my legacy reached me one night about the same time that the act was passed that gave votes to women. A solicitor's letter fell into the post-box and when I opened it I found that she had left me five hundred pounds a year for ever. Of the two—the vote and the money—the money, I own, seemed infinitely the more important. Before that I had made my living by cadging odd jobs from newspapers, by reporting a donkey show here or a wedding there; I had earned a few pounds by addressing envelopes, reading to old ladies, making artificial flowers, teaching the alphabet to small children in a kindergarten. Such were the chief occupations that were open to women before 1918. I need not, I am afraid, describe in any detail the hardness of the work, for you know perhaps women who have done it; nor the difficulty of living on the money when it was earned, for you may have tried. But what still remains with me as a worse infliction than either was the poison of fear and bitterness which those days bred in me. To begin with, always to be doing work that one did not wish to do, and to do it like a slave, flattering and fawning, not always necessarily perhaps, but it seemed necessary and the stakes were too great to run risks; and then the thought of that one gift which it was death hide—a small one but dear to the possessor—perishing and with it my self, my soul—and this became like a rust eating away the bloom of the spring, destroying the tree at its heart. However, as I say, my aunt died; and whenever I change a ten-shilling note a little of that rust and corrosion is rubbed off, fear and bitterness go. Indeed, I thought, slipping the silver into my purse, it is remarkable, remembering the bitterness of those days, what a change of temper a fixed income will bring about. No force in the world can take from me my

five hundred pounds. Food, house, and clothing are mine for ever. Therefore not merely do effort and labour cease, but also hatred and bitterness. I need not hate any man; he cannot hurt me. I need not flatter any man; he has nothing to give me. So imperceptibly I found myself adopting a new attitude towards the other half of the human race. It was absurd to blame any class or any sex, as a whole. Great bodies of people are never responsible for what they do. They are driven by instincts which are not within their control. They too, the patriarchs, the professors, had endless difficulties, terrible drawbacks to contend with. Their education had been in some ways as faulty as my own. It had bred in them defects as great. True, they had money and power, but only at the cost of harbouring in their breasts an eagle, a vulture, for ever tearing the liver out and plucking at the lungs—the instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition which drives them to desire other people's fields and goods perpetually, to make frontiers and flags; battleships and poison gas; to offer up their own lives and their children's lives. Walk through the Admiralty Arch (I had reached that monument), or any other avenue given up to trophies and cannon, and reflect upon the kind of glory celebrated there. Or watch in the spring sunshine the stockbroker and the great barrister going indoors to make money and more money and more money when it is a fact that five hundred pounds a year will keep one alive in the sunshine. These are unpleasant instincts to harbour, I reflected. They are bred of the conditions of life; of the lack of civilization, I thought, looking at the statue of the Duke of Cambridge, and in particular at the feathers in his cocked hat, with a fixity that they have scarcely ever received before. And, as I realized these drawbacks, by degrees fear and bitterness modified themselves into pity and toleration; and then in a year or two, pity and toleration went, and the greatest release of all came, which is freedom to think of things in themselves. That building, for example, do I like it or not? Is that picture beautiful or not? Is that in my opinion a good book or a bad? Indeed my aunt's legacy unveiled the sky to me, and substituted for the large and imposing figure of a gentleman, which Milton recommended for my perpetual adoration, a view of the open sky.