

After Dinner Speech

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You are sitting on the clunker, but nothing happens. No matter how hard you bear down, nothing. Not a thing. Maybe, a little thing. In the world of comic books, when a person is in trouble, he can call for Superman or in Japan we might call for Ultraman or Astro Boy. But when we are suffering from constipation, we can call for a laxative, an enema, zantac, fiber, more fiber, Metamucil, sugar-free Metamucil, unflavored Metamucil, calcium enriched Metamucil. Haaa... No wonder Americans gotta go, gotta go gotta go right now. Americans have too many alternatives with regard to health. But what to do? Superman! Ultraman! Astro boy! Please choose one method for me!! Just in case, their English is not good. スーパーマン！ウルトラマン！アトム！お願い一つ選んで！！

Over the next several minutes, we want to discuss the many alternatives Americans have for managing their health. First, we want to examine the harmful effects of having too many alternatives by showing some examples. Second, we want to examine the Japanese philosophy as a possible alternative, which would satisfy Americans by providing yet another option.

Having many alternatives does not necessarily promote better health. Conversely, it sometimes makes health problems worse. The more alternatives we invent, the more serious health problems we create. Historically speaking, the discovery of penicillin led to the creation of antibiotics. Today, often two or more antibiotics are used to tackle a disease, but according to the article titled "Evolutionary Biology" by Jim Bill, this just leads to antibiotic-resistant strains of diseases. In this way, the number of diseases with anti-biotic resistant strains has doubled, tripled, quadrupled. Now that we have an abundance of antibiotic resistant diseases, we need more antibiotics to choose from. And thus the circle continues.

In the United States, the most common alternative is the second opinion. The advent of the second opinion was supposed to be a promising solution for every American to receive correct treatment. Since the second opinion could not completely eliminate medical malpractice, another solution was invited; third opinion. Second opinion, third opinion, fourth opinion, fifth opinion... And this continues forever and ever. It might end up cellphoning all doctors in the United States—instead of writing our congressmen.

Americans even have many choices to consider according to their commercials. There are so many commercials. As my Japanese Political Science professor Dr. Ito says, "this is da year of da big 'erection'!!" Judging from their commercials, I know who to vote for. Viagra, Levitra, Cialis. There are too many sexual drugs. Some have serious side effects, which can cause heart disease. If we experience an erection for more than four hours, we should call a doctor immediately or Monica Lewinski or if she is not your preference, "Who ya gonna call?" Ghostbusters?

Some may say Americans tend to choose a simple method for maintaining health such as fitness. According to the ICAA, the International Council on ACTIVE Aging, all levels of Americans like fitness to prevent diseases. It seems like a quite simple method, but we have lots of state-of-the-art machines, especially for six-packs, of course for balloon-like abs, or keg, or in my case it's four-pack. Too much American food has been invading my belly. Moreover, some people have their own gyms at home. It seems to be an everlasting dream of mankind to reduce weight and be fit. We cannot say which will come first, our discovery of living organisms on Mars or our success with a diet. Hurry up, according to New York Times March 9 2004, NASA found water on Mars already.

What is the result of these examples? A report by the World Health Organization 2003, says that the United States ranked 15th in healthy life expectancy, and 33rd in average life expectancy.

On the contrary, in my home country, Japan, we traditionally like to live in accordance with nature. When we feel sick, of course we take western medicine, but we tend to choose natural healing methods. For example, according to Japan Marketing Data Bank, more than 70 percent of Japanese eat Natto or Yogurt to maintain our health. Yogurt is not the stuff that Americans eat like bubble gum yogurt, cotton candy trix yogurt, strawberry Danon yogurt, banana Yoplait, and a host of others. It comes in much smaller packages and is plain, plain, plain. Natto also comes in small packages. Basically, it is fermented soy beans; in other words, over-ripe, almost rotten soy beans. And, yes, if you aren't used to it, it can taste just as bad as it sounds - But it's good for you. Who said that healthy stuff will taste good? As the Japanese saying goes, "Effective medications are bitter to the taste." In Natto's case, that could be paraphrased as "Healthy food is yucky to the taste."

Also, 58 percent of Japanese take walks to maintain health. The aforementioned study asked the question: What do you do to maintain your health? The answers were: "Sleep adequately," "get massage," "visit hot springs" and so on. According the Journal of international Society of Life Information Science, massage is proven, a scientifically

effective healing method. It works not only on human beings but also on fruits. Japanese folklore tells that massaging a tangerine will sweeten it. Likewise, I wonder if massaging a girlfriend will make her sweet. Hum...Four hours... Superman!! Ultraman!! Astro boy!! However, even if it does continue that long, the natural method is the best. These methods are really simple, aren't they? In addition, these are all effective to retain our health. In fact, according to the report by World Health Organization 2003, Japan took first place in both average life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.

Actually, in the United States, alternative and complementary medicines have been added to the alternatives in recent years. In fact, according to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Americans spend more than 27 billion dollars on alternative or complementary therapies each year. But, presently, we have not achieved much success. To improve the result of this study more effective, Japan and the United States should cooperate.

This does not mean that Japanese philosophy is better than that of American, or only alternative methods are wonderful, but too many alternatives can cause problems.

We examined the harmful effect of having too many alternatives and the solution. If Superman cooperates with Astro Boy or Ultraman, nothing will threaten our lives. Therefore, we must marry, even if we have to go to New Paltz, NY, Japanese philosophy with American state-of-the-art technology to be healthier and happier. And if all else fails, eat whatever you want and die when you're suppose to.

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