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C-SPAN
400 North Capitol St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Wednesday, July 18, 1990

Dear Sirs:

I saw your series on Japan and I found it to be entertaining and informative. I particularly enjoyed the scenes where the camera just observed the Japanese being Japanese. Please send me more information on your Japanese series and anything else that you might have concerning C-SPAN's coverage of Japan, particularly any details about when the next series will be filmed or shown.

I liked the style of Mr. Lamb in his interviews with the Japanese. He gave his subjects enough background so that they could see what his questions pertained to but yet he asked interesting in-depth questions.

There are however, several points upon which I'd like to comment. These are intended to give Mr. Lamb and the C-SPAN team some information which I hope will assist in the creation of future programs dealing with Japan.

When dealing with government officials in Japan the members of the Diet of often interviewed and many things are asked of them. The Diet members have very little real power, almost all of the legislation that is proposed and passed by the diet is submitted by the bureaus and not by the Diet members. I think it would be closer to the heartbeat of Japan's government to interview the leaders of the bureaucracies, not the diet members.

In the segment dealing with the round table, the selection of the students reflected only the very wealthy, elite students. Tokyo University is the American equivalent of M.I.T., Harvard, and Yale all rolled up into one. It has not much to do with the academic reputation of the University, I once went to its technical library and found it wanting, but with the connections that you get by going there.

Waseda University is also an upper tier university, it has a reputation as being a home to wealthy Japanese kids, but it is definitely on the second tier with respect to Tokyo University. If you want proof of Tokyo University's strength in Japan look at the past universities of Japan's Prime Ministers, an amazing number come from Tokyo University and specifically the law department.

I think that you could get a better idea of what the youth of Japan thinks by getting a cross section of people from different universities maybe some from technical institutes or schools far out in the country.

I think that Mr. Lamb would find it interesting if he compared the Japanese's answers to his questions with what is found in a Japanese newspaper. He would probably find that

many of the "opinions" that he received are right from the papers, even with respect to phraseology.

The American journalists who are stationed in Japan seemed to have their fingers on the basic pulse of Japan's politics but they do not know what it is like to live in Japan. I could tell from their comments that they live in "Gaijin ghettos" like Roppongi or Hiroo and those places are not related to the "real" Japan. To get a feel for what it is like to live in Japan as a foreigner it might be illuminating to interview people who have lived in Japan in situations that are not as nice as a journalist. A good source of people would be engineers or English teachers.

I make these judgments drawing from personal experience. I lived for two years in Japan in a normal Japanese apartment as an engineer for a Japanese company. I was very fortunate that I met Japanese from many different social strata and in many different situations, from the "dregs" in Ni-chome in Shinjuku to the rich and powerful bankers and their kids.

Overall, I enjoyed the series immensely and I would love to assist in any manner in the creation of any other programs of this type.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.