

# Living without Witchcraft

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## The Golden Age of the 1960s

### Great Society

Despite being 6ft-5inches (about 196 cm) tall and one of America's gigantic presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson did not leave much of an impression, coming as he did between Kennedy and Nixon. Nevertheless, his domestic program he advocated called the "Great Society" is a policy that warrants revisiting.

The television series "Bewitched" that first screened in September 1964, shortly before Johnson became president, would go on to become popular not only in America, but also in places like Europe and Japan.

The series was a comedy about the lives of a rather conservative husband, Darrin, and his wife Samantha, who happens to be a witch, as well as their family and neighbors. Samantha promises her conservative husband that she will not use witchcraft to make her housework easier. Even without witchcraft, however, she is freed from heavy labor by the latest system kitchen, refrigerator, washing machine, and other such innovations. Viewers around the world were entranced by the latest home appliances and fashions.

The 1960s marked the arrival of the consumer society, with developed nations enjoying economic booms. The USA had become the envy of the world, with the adoption of cars, appliances, and other such products having become increasingly widespread since the 1920s, earlier than anywhere else. When Richard Nixon, then US Vice President, showed off the electrically powered US way of life to Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev in the form of a model kitchen exhibited at a 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow, Khrushchev's response was said to be highly sarcastic. This came to be known as the "kitchen debate."

In the title of a book published in 1958, economist John Kenneth Galbraith ironically called a society that is overflowing with such goods "The Affluent Society." While its society as a whole was prosperous, the USA still faced numerous challenges such as discrimination and inequality.

The Great Society program was intended to overcome these challenges. It was a wide-ranging plan that encompassed, among other things, the Civil Rights Act, the Medicare program for elderly health insurance, the Medicaid program for assisting with the medical expenses of low-income families, education, and environmental protection.

This was the dawn of Society 4.0, a time of transition from the industrial to the information society. The challenges that Johnson sought to address are still with us today.

How can we resolve the problems that have persisted up to our present time of Society 5.0? To answer this question, it is worthwhile to go back and revisit this program.

### Building Electrical Appliances that Contribute to Culture

When setting up Taga Works, which would later become a core plant for making home appliances, Hitachi founder Namihei Odaira called on staff to build electrical appliances that would contribute to culture.

Hitachi entered the home appliance business in earnest in 1955. Sadahiko Onishi, the Vice President then in charge of the business, was the son of Hajime Onishi who has been called the father of Japanese philosophy and who left behind many thoughts on the subject of ethics, including Kantian studies and the question of conscience.

Unlike large electrical machinery, advertising is an important part of the home appliance business. Sadahiko treasured the writings of his father, who had died at a young age, and chose as an advertising slogan, "Building Happy Homes with Electrical Products." Since then, Hitachi's home appliance business has been based on the two principles of contributing to culture and happy homes.

This article considers what Hitachi's mission should be in a society that is undergoing a transition from tangible objects to intangible experiences, addressing this question in terms of the "culture" talked about by Odaira and the "happiness" of Onishi.

## Culture and Happiness

### Understanding Multiculturalism

In Society 2.0 that existed prior to the Industrial Revolution, the work of the home (household management) was shared between husband and wife. Japanese folk tales have a stock phrase about the old man going into the hills to gather wood while the old woman goes to the stream to do the washing. Gathering wood provides fuel for the fire and material for carpentry. The work of the kitchen gets done by the man bringing home the fuel, utensils, and food while his wife takes care of its preparation.

Ever since the Industrial Revolution, however, fuels (coal or electricity) and utensils have been made in factories. The

## [1] Discussion at Design Laboratory



Source: Hitachi Graph Vol. 4, No. 4

husband goes out to work at a factory and only the woman's work remains at home.

Hitachi has been working on the electrification of industry, meaning the job of the husband who goes out to work, ever since it was first established. When making a start on the electrification of the housework done by women, Onishi and his team recognized the importance of design. The design laboratory that opened in 1957 started out with three people who worked on home appliances [1]. These were soon joined by Nanae Yamamoto, who was recruited from industry, and Takiko Hashimoto, a recent graduate of Tokyo University of the Arts. A practical testing group was subsequently established at the laboratory in 1962 to evaluate how users respond to products, with a large number of female employees with qualifications in home economics joining the company.

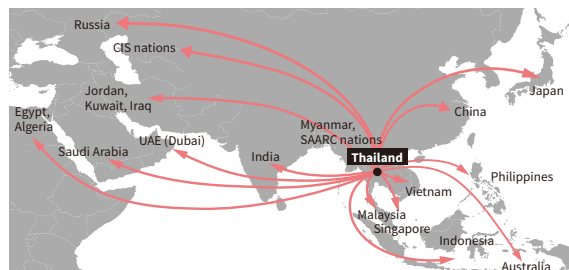
Given that home appliances are such an integral part of daily life, it is essential not only to consider the female perspective, but also to obtain an in-depth understanding of the living practices in different parts of the world based on factors such as their climate and history.

Established as a home appliance manufacturer in 1971, Hitachi Consumer Products (Thailand), Ltd. (HCPT) supplies products to 70 different countries around the world including in Southeast Asia, India, and the Middle East [2], [3].

Differences in circumstances and history are accompanied by very different ways of life. In the case of vacuum cleaners, for example, whereas the ability to suck up sand is important in the desert region of Saudi Arabia, what matters in places that have a tradition of using carpets, such as Turkey, is the ability to deal with deep-pile carpet. Similarly, different forms of clothing place different demands on washing machines and different foods require different refrigerator designs.

To acquire an understanding of different living practices, the sales marketers and designers of home appliances conduct

## [2] HCPT supplies its products to 70 different countries around the world



HCPT: Hitachi Consumer Products (Thailand), Ltd. UAE: United Arab Emirates  
CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

## [3] Women working at an HCPT office



market research on how people live in different places. This is a painstaking task that involves visiting people's homes and examining things like the dust collected inside their vacuum cleaners.

Taking account of all of the information collected in this way is difficult. Working with local manufacturers is also necessary. What matters in this case is the approach they bring to the task of making things. No matter how capable a company may be, it is difficult to forge partnerships with those who do not share the principles of contributing to culture and making happy homes.

## Thinking about Happiness

Prior to the advent of washing machines, people had to wash, rinse, and dry clothes for themselves. Communal laundries in the basements of apartment buildings were a common feature of the German-speaking world. These used to include a shared laundry boiler. Women would repeatedly soak their laundry in boiling lye over four days. They would climb the staircase carrying the heavy wet laundry and then hang it out to dry on their verandas. It was hard and mind-numbing work. Washing machines have freed women from this toil.

Back when material goods were scarce, the provision of home appliances brought happiness to homes. How then can Hitachi contribute to happy homes in this new age of intangible experiences?

The Gallup Global Well-being Index (GWBI) is an indicator used to measure happiness. GWBI measures well-being based on five elements: (1) Purpose, which measures how motivated

people are to achieve their life goals, (2) Social, which considers relationships with family and friends, (3) Financial, which is based on factors such as employment status, (4) Community, which measures things like how well people fit in to the place where they live, and (5) Physical, which considers the healthiness of people's lifestyles as well as their material prosperity.

It should be possible to contribute further to happiness by drawing on knowledge built up through corporate operations and past market research as well as business activities.

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## Contributing to Culture and Happiness as a Company

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### Foundry Town

*"Kyupora no Aru Machi"* (Foundry Town), a 1962 movie starring Sayuri Yoshinaga and set in the town of Kawaguchi, home to a number of foundries, dealt with the societal challenges of that time. The protagonist's father was a stubborn foundry worker who had become partially disabled as a result of a workplace accident.

The foundries of Kawaguchi were enjoying good times, as exemplified by their being called on to make the cauldron for the Olympic flame at the Tokyo Olympics, two years after the movie's release. Unfortunately, one of the issues facing society at the time was how to improve the performance of small and medium-sized businesses when small workshops like that where the protagonist's father worked were facing a wave of change in the form of industry restructuring and automation. Her injured father lost his job and was knocked around by life, being unable to adapt to new technology.

Seeing her father's predicament caused the protagonist to consider quitting school. The movie ends with her visiting Hitachi's Musashi semiconductor plant along with her classmates on a school trip. Seeing the many women who were attending part-time high school while also working made her resolve to choose the same path.

### Growth Industries and Company Schools

Semiconductors were a growth industry in those days that employed a large number of women who were able to undertake the delicate work required and who came to be known as "transistor girls." This was at a time when only about 50% of school students in Japan continued as far as high school. As in the movie, many young women left school after junior high. This led Hitachi to open facilities such as kindergartens to provide childcare for working mothers and in-house girls' schools that provided a high school education at various sites. The Musashi Works was one of these, as was a Yokohama Works that made televisions and another in Tochigi that made refrigerators.

In the Great Society program and elsewhere, education poses challenges for all developed nations. Not least of these is how to equip unskilled workers with the new skills they need to adapt to automation.

While the need for company schools and other such institutions may have faded as education levels rose and more public support was provided, Hitachi has continued to contribute to happiness in a variety of different forms through its corporate activities.

### Community Strength: Social Capital

This was a time when home appliances were still very expensive. In 1958, Hitachi's Zircon Bear refrigerator was priced at 54,000 yen at a time when the average monthly income for a company employee was only 16,608 yen. In response, Hitachi launched a hire purchase (installment plan) service in Tokyo and Osaka in 1957, the origin of what is now Hitachi Capital Corporation.

Originally, Japan got by with mutual lending societies and other forms of financial cooperatives. While some of these are still in existence in the form of mutual savings banks (what are now known in Japan as "second regional banks"), most went out of business from the Meiji Era onwards.

These organizations are now called rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) and are common in Southeast Asia. Indonesia has ROSCAs that are known as "*arisans*" and provide a means for people on low incomes to support one another, enabling them to purchase goods such as motorbikes or personal computers. When seeking to make communities a better place to live, it is important to act in ways that take account of this and other forms of social capital.

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## Who Gets to Design the New Society?

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### Design of Society 5.0

As noted above, the old model from Society 3.0 of the husband going out to work while the wife works in the home has already lost its relevance in Society 4.0.

Women became accustomed to working outside the home during the second world war when their labor was needed because so many men had gone away to fight. The rapid emergence of new industries after the war also saw large numbers of women going out to work, as exemplified by the "transistor girls."

In politics, Masa Nakayama became Japan's first female cabinet minister in 1960 when she became the Minister of Health and Welfare. This was the same year that Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) became the world's first female prime minister.

While *Bewitched* was a comedy, its underlying story reflected what was happening in society. To be a witch, for example, was to be part of a religious minority. When Samantha becomes Queen of the Witches, reflecting how women are taking a more prominent role in public life, her duties become a source of quarrels with her husband. Elizabeth Montgomery, who played the part of Samantha, was a working mother who gave birth to three children during the course of the series. The television program made use of this, portraying Samantha, too, as a working mother who had two children, Tabitha and Adam.

The values people held to in the Industrial Revolution have clearly aged. The Reagan administration of the 1980s introduced a variety of policies aimed at strengthening American industry. A government-commissioned report entitled "Workforce 2000" by William B. Johnston of the Hudson Institute was published in 1987 and made the case that the traditional form of white-male-dominated corporations had reached its limit.

While this marked the beginning of diversity policies at American companies, looking at the example of Melinda Gates as co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the response of even forward-looking American corporations remains inadequate.

Her book, "The Moment of Lift," includes an anecdote about a female African computer scientist who found, when she tried using face recognition software, that the software repeatedly threw errors when shown her own face. She concluded that the software developers must have unconsciously tailored their program to work on people who resembled themselves.

People that software fails to recognize may suddenly find that they can no longer withdraw money from the bank or pass through immigration at airports. In making this point, Melinda Gates sounded a warning about the consequences of a lack of diversity in software development at a time when artificial intelligence (AI) and robots are coming to play a major role. Certainly, diversity will be vital in designing the architecture of the data-driven society if it is to avoid introducing new social problems.

### From Private to Public: 360-degrees of Happiness

While Hitachi's design laboratory has gone through a number of name changes, the path carved out by Yamamoto and Hashimoto remains the same. Kaori Kashimura, who was appointed to head the Design Division in 2014, has long pursued the idea of human-centric design, having since her student days been interested in the writings of the famous psychologist Don Norman, which include "The Design of Everyday Things." In her current role as Chief Lumada Officer (CLO) at Hitachi Global Life Solutions, Inc., she is working to develop Hitachi's Smart Life Business that aims to utilize the

IoT and other digital technologies to improve people's quality of life (QoL), one example being the Doshiteru service for monitoring elderly people living alone.

Japan's baby boom generation will start entering the latter stages of old age from around 2021. A society designed on the basis of husbands going out to work while wives look after the home is not equipped to enable people to live healthily and happily at a time characterized by a very high proportion of elderly. What is needed, rather, is a design that accommodates various differences. This will require even higher levels of diversity. Echoing Onishi's words, the current slogan of the home appliance business is "360-degrees of happiness: a happy life for each and every customer," meaning a happy way of life for all.

## Toward a New Society

### Global Women's Summit

Hitachi has made the promotion of diversity part of its management strategy, having instigated a variety of awareness-raising measures, etc. aimed at creating an environment in which many different types of people can thrive. These initiatives are happening internationally, not just in Japan, one example being the Global Women's Summit that brings together female staff from Hitachi's operations around the world. Held at a different venue each year, the 2018 event was in Singapore and was attended by 170 people from 17 different countries, including Hitachi President & CEO Toshiaki Higashihara [4].

According to the "strength of weak ties" theory of Mark Granovetter of Stanford University, ideas for innovation are more likely to come from passing acquaintances (people with whom we have "weak ties") than they are from family, friends, and work colleagues.

Hitachi is active in a wide variety of different industries around the world. I hope that this summit, which brings together women whose work, place of residence, and customs are all very different, will give rise to innovations that are a good fit with the new society.

#### [4] Third Global Women's Summit (Singapore)





## Interacting with Society

Partnering with the government, civic society, and others is clearly important in the pursuit of happiness at the society and community level.

Various forms of inequality, including disparities in infrastructure between urban and rural areas, are among the societal challenges facing India as it approaches a population of 1.2 billion. On taking power in 2014, the Modi government introduced measures aimed at addressing these challenges that included the Digital India Programme for digitalizing administrative services and the *Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana* (PMJDY) financial inclusion program that aims to spread financial services nationwide.

The aim of PMJDY is to provide all people with bank accounts so that even people in rural villages will have access to financial services at a level similar to those in major cities. Hitachi Payment Services Pvt. Ltd. (HPY), which operates approximately 60,000 automatic teller machines (ATMs) and 1 million point-of-sale (POS) systems, has responded to this government action by establishing a joint venture with State Bank of India, India's largest publicly owned bank, and setting out to develop a new electronic payment service.

One of the factors promoting PMJDY is the India Stack platform based around India's national identity number system called *Aadhaar*. India Stack is attracting international attention for its provision of an open application programming interface (API) for services such as identity verification, electronic signatures, and remittances between bank accounts.

While HPY already provides devices that support payment over India Stack as part of its services, development is ongoing in anticipation of rapid growth in the use of India Stack for payments.

## Living without Witchcraft

In Society 3.0, a husband's role was to go out and work while his wife's role was to look after the home. In Samantha's time, the latest home appliances made for a happier home, without resorting to witchcraft. In Society 5.0, meanwhile, in place of witchcraft, the private, public, and community sectors all need to work together as they seek to spread happiness to all corners of society, with everyone being able to participate at work and in the home and community.

To this end, Hitachi is transforming its organization through a variety of measures that will give it the means to contribute to the happiness of this new society.

Hitachi also intends to draw on the lifestyle information that home appliance sales marketers have gone around collecting and the knowledge contained within Hitachi Group internationally to

offer suggestions for this new design of society to the *Keidanren* and the governments of Japan and other countries.

The 2019 Global Women's Summit was held in Tokyo in October and included plans for a tour of the birthplace of Hitachi, primarily for the benefit of participants from overseas.

In the future, we intend to engage with many people who hold a variety of different values. In doing so, what matters to us more than anything else are the philosophies left to us by Odaïra and Onishi.

Given these philosophies, we have no need for witchcraft.

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