



***East is East and West is West
And never the twain shall meet***

During my recent visit to Japan in November 2007, the sixth within the past 17 years, I recalled the above lines by the nineteenth century British poet Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936). I was wondering if this statement is now valid. True the Japanese still have their special eating habits and from time to time one sees ladies in Kimonos, but in general the appearance of French café houses serving café au lait and European gateaux as well as restaurants serving hamburgers and Coca Cola, is a proof that the situation is changing. Forks and knives are also readily available in restaurants. The magnificent shopping centers decorated with Christmas lights and Christmas trees and playing Christmas music is rather surprising. Japan the once closed society is now adapting to Western way of life.

I had a Japanese couple at home in 1989 and my wife prepared a variety of Western dishes. The young lady at that time, however, preferred to eat a can of sardine instead. Last year the same couple visited me again. When I wanted to take them to a sushi restaurant as a surprise for them, I was the one who was surprised - - the same lady now wants to go a Western restaurant !

The advanced technology in Japan, the cleanliness, and the discipline make the country distinct from the Orient. Needless to say the democratic system is also a fine characteristic of the Japanese system.

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