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### *The Art of Communication*

*In mid-April, I left the UK after staying there for three-and-a-half years to take a new assignment at our head office in Japan. I enjoyed my time in the UK and found it very impressive. A particularly memorable incident occurred one day in the souvenir shop in the British Museum. I met an elderly lady who wanted to buy some souvenirs. She asked the sales assistant what they cost, and the sales assistant replied. The lady informed the sales assistant that she wanted to buy the items. The sales assistant asked if the lady needed to have them gift-wrapped. The lady said no, but she needed a plastic bag. The goods were put in a plastic bag, as she expected. The elderly lady paid with a GBP10.00 bank note, and the sales assistant gave her the plastic bag and the change with thanks. In return, the lady said thank you very much.*

*This type of scene happens all over the world and would be ordinary without my additional comments. If I say this conversation was done in two languages, maybe many people will be impressed. The old lady was Japanese and could speak only Japanese, and the sales assistant was a British lady who spoke English.*

*This is a typical example of good communication without a common language. If we are determined to make our counterparts understand, they will do their best to understand. Good communication will result; as the old proverb says, "Where there is a will, there is a way."*

*Next spring, we will have the 2005 World Exposition, in Aichi, Japan, along with the construction of a new airport, Centrair (New Central Japan Airport). We are expecting to have more visitors than ever from all over the world. When you come to Japan, better communication will make your stay more enjoyable, with or without a common language.*

