

APPENDIX

ARTICLE I

JAPAN

Appropriate for All Ages

Japanese toymakers are focusing on senior citizens

BY MARTHA BRANT

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE IN JAPAN of the clout of teenage girls, the arbiters of taste and uncrowned queens of the fashion industry. But when it comes to toys, a radically different demographic is beginning to call the shots.

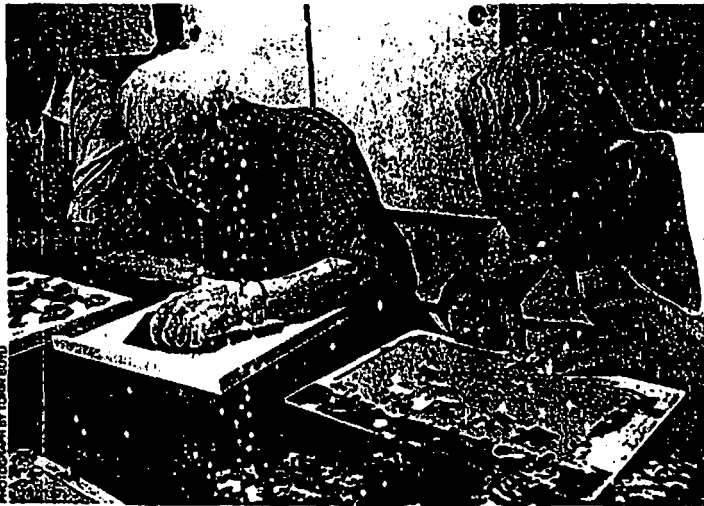
Japanese toymakers now see senior citizens as their most dynamic market. Nearly 22 million Japanese—17.4 percent of the population—are over 65, and that number

brains stay active and sharp. While researching Alzheimer's disease, Musha found that art therapy such as painting and claywork helped to prevent the brains of Alzheimer's patients from deteriorating. "What works best for the elderly is something that they enjoy, where they have to use their brain and which requires concentration from 30 minutes to one hour," he says.

Designers have a range of products in the pipeline. Last year Takara, another major toymaker, introduced e-kara, a microphone size karaoke machine, and Popila, a slowed-down videogame involving bouncing balls, which is meant to help improve reflexes. A company called Epoch says its jigsaw puzzles can help old folks stay nimble of mind, while the Kawada Co., known for its educational building blocks, claims its products do the same.

Toymakers are also hoping that the pet robots that have recently become popular can be marketed to seniors, who increasingly are living alone as nuclear families come to dominate Japanese society. Tomy has introduced a high tech, talking Dog.com and this fall will release memoni, a robot with artificial intelligence that can carry on limited conversations. Bandai is selling a cat-like robot that responds to the human touch and stops moving when it gets upset about something. What has most surprised Bandai is the response to a series of its cuddly high tech dolls, Primopuel, which nod, sing and talk. A company spokesman says that the dolls' original target audience was young women living alone, but that the most eager customers seem to be senior citizens buying the toys as companions.

Toymakers still face a critical problem, though: the average household savings among seniors is 24 million yen (\$200,000), almost double that of a working household, but they are far more cautious about what they buy than teens. The key may be appealing to a younger generation, who every year are stumped for gift ideas before September's Respect for the Aged Day. In the end, teens may have to jump-start this trend, too. ■



Child's play: Experts say puzzles and games can help keep minds sharp

is expected to top 25 percent by 2020. Three million senior citizens live alone, and 1.55 million Japanese are senile (their numbers are also expected to grow rapidly). This aging population presents a huge "silver market"—estimated at 50 trillion yen (\$416 billion)—for everything from beds to cosmetics to home care nurses and helpers.

Major industries such as electronics, construction and foodstuffs have already begun developing products tailored to old folks: robots to help out around the house, homes that have no steps or stairs and healthy, oil-free foods. The toy industry wants a piece of the action. "There is great potential," says Yoshinori Haga, an official at Bandai, the biggest toymaker in Japan. "Toys can be used for entertainment, to give the old people nostalgic feelings or to be a companion for those who live alone."

Indeed, playthings are not just for fun anymore. Toshimitsu Musha, president of the Brain Functions Lab near Tokyo, argues that playing with toys can help human

ARTICLE 2

SOCIETY & THE ARTS

BOOKS

It's Da Bomb

A psychiatrist's first novel stars an ecoterrorist

BY DAVID GATES

PETER D. KRAMER'S FIRST NOVEL, "Spectacular Happiness," sounds like a stinkeroo. Fiction isn't his métier: he's the psychiatrist whose "Listening to Prozac" and "Should You Leave?" showed a profound, agile intellect and a clear prose style, but no gift for daydreaming. Worse, the book appears to be one of those Grishamite ripped from the headlines dealies.

*Spectacular
Happiness
Peter D. Kramer
(Scribner)*



In fact, "Spectacular Happiness" turns out to be both a serious novel of ideas and a pretty good one. Careful readers of Kramer's nonfiction know he's got as deep an interest in human murk as any novelist. He hedges his advocacy of Prozac with disturbing reflections on how the personality changes it causes alter our conception of the self; and anyone looking for a yes-no answer in "Should You Leave?" would do better with a Magic 8-Ball. In "Spectacular Happiness," Chip Samuels, a community-college teacher and handyman, is sane, mad, or both.

Yet Chip insists his "spectacles" are not protests but art. "The explosion is absurd," he says, showing a video clip. "But allowing ourselves to be moved by the image, we may come to see the house as absurd as well, and then to contrast the two absurdities." He's a better thinker, observer and describer than he is a storyteller, but the intellectual conflicts lend the book all the tension anybody should need. Given a world of rapacious capitalism and a planet whose oceans are rising, should you bomb? Two guesses. ■

CHINA

Free at Last: 'I'm Not a Spy'

Scholar Li Shaomin tells of his harrowing five months in a Chinese prison. A NEWSWEEK exclusive.

BY LYNETTE CLEMETSON

CONFINED IN A CHINESE PRISON, LI Shaomin was stripped of virtually everything that would bring him comfort—letters from his daughter, the Bible his wife sent him, books and newspapers with information on the outside world. Referred to as prisoner _____ the Princeton-educated professor was allowed few privileges.

Among them, smoking—a habit he had struggled to give up years before. Now back in Washington, D.C., tasting freedom for the first time in five months, Li's old vice is the only thing that can calm his nerves. "Do you mind if I smoke?" he asks, as he rakes a hand through his hair. He takes a long drag and, in a weary, monotone voice, begins to recount the harrowing details of his captivity as an alleged spy.

It is a story he feared he'd never get a chance to tell. Li, a 44-year-old American citizen, is one of three U.S.-based academics released from Chinese prisons last week after being convicted of espionage. U.S. protests over his arrest and that of American University researcher Gao Zhan had exacerbated tensions in the already difficult relationship between the Bush administration and Beijing. On the eve of this week's state visit by Secretary of State Colin Powell—and two weeks after Beijing won its much-publicized bid for the 2008 Olympic Games—the scholars became pawns in a delicate diplomatic contest. Their releases, say China watchers, were timed for maximum effect. The Chinese leadership "had to save these playing cards for the most opportune moment," says political-science professor Andrew Nathan, of Columbia University. "By releasing them they hoped to take human rights off the agenda."

Before putting him on a plane back to America, Li's captors warned him not to talk. But the plain-spoken professor of business strategy and marketing, in an interview with NEWSWEEK, said he is discussing his ordeal

because he believes revealing China's injustices is the only way to push the nation toward greater democracy. Detained in late February, Li says his passport and phone were confiscated at the border. Later flown to Beijing, he was transported wearing fake sunglasses with blacked-out lenses to a house outside the city, where he was interrogated regularly for two-and-a-half months before



"I nearly cried when I saw the news stories. To know that the outside world was supporting me—that feeling was so great."

—LI SHAOMIN, the American professor expelled from China, on reading papers while in captivity

being moved to prison. But as an American, Li was treated far better than other prisoners, he says.

Li's only lifeline was periodic visits from an American Embassy official. "I heard you're from Princeton, so I brought you this," embassy liaison Jim Levy told Li on his first visit. With guards looking on, he passed Li a white hooded Yale sweat shirt, smiled and shook his hand. On other visits Levy read a letter from Li's wife, Yingli, and delivered a T shirt from his 9-year-old daughter, Diana, with a hand-painted pic-

ture of their house in New Jersey. (Dian turned his case into a mini cause célèbre by writing President George W. Bush about it Li wore her gift shirt under his dress shirt on the day of his trial.) As the months dragged on and Li's spirits ebbed, Levy would bring in Western newspapers with stories on the scholars and hold them up for the prisoner to glimpse from across the room. "I nearly cried when I saw the news stories," says Li. "To know that the outside world was supporting me—that feeling was so great."

Asked about the charges he was convicted of, Li stiffens his back and answers sternly, "I am not a spy." But he has been an outspoken advocate of democratic reform. While a Ph.D. candidate at Princeton in 1989, Li organized student protests in support of the pro-democracy movement. And as a business professor

he has published several papers and books examining China's economic and social reforms. The apparent charge that prompted his detainment: accepting "secret" documents—magazine articles, book excerpts and speeches—from fellow scholar and detainee Gao Zhan. Li admits knowing Gao but would not comment any further. Gao, back in her Virginia home last week, maintained her innocence.

With tensions temporarily eased, the Bush administration is expected to begin dialogue on other issues this week, such as President Bush's upcoming visit to China in October. But human-rights activists are urging Powell not to let Beijing off too easily. Several U.S.-based academics, business people and religious prisoners with less-vocal supporters than Li and Gao remain detained in Chinese prisons. "China was very clever," says Mike Jendrzeczyk, of Human Rights Watch in Washington. "It's now up to the administration to show they know how to use leverage as well."

Li Shaomin agrees that continued pressure is good for China. But he wants only to watch the machinations from the sidelines and return to his work. As he boarded the United Airlines flight last week to take him back to America, attendants handed him his passport and a glass of champagne and said, "Welcome home." "I felt so proud at that moment," Li says, safely back in Washington, his wife sitting by his side, and his daughter watching cartoons in the next room. He taps his box of cigarettes on the table, grows quiet and smiles.