

Japanese Ask, "Why change?"

Excerpt from Washington Post Service, "New U.S. Treasury Secretary's Urgings Perplexing the Japanese" (by Doug Struck) 2001.

"The image of Japanese working themselves to death aside, the average work week among manufacturing workers is five hours shorter than in the United States. American workers on average put in the equivalent of two weeks more work per year than the Japanese, according to the International Labor Organization. . .

"Much of the economic burden is on the books of Japan's corporations, not on the backs of the Japanese. Japan's public and corporate officials have largely resisted the route so often urged by the United States to cut their losses, cut their workforce and let weak companies go bankrupt. Japan balks at the U.S. model wherein highly paid CEOs rescue a struggling company by throwing thousands of its employees out of work. Instead, workers keep their jobs while the companies limp along. It may be inefficient capitalism, they say, but workers have jobs."