

Part 4
The third stage of my life as business consultant
(6-Story 12)
Visit International Brotherhood of
Teamsters Union headquarter

Back to Washington DC, I hired a taxi operator whom I became so intimate with my often time hiring him. My destination was the Teamster Union Headquarter office. “Teamster” is a huge labor union, which is something that the managements do not like. It was organized in 1903 as the international (America and Canada) labor union. Even a crying child falls in silence then heard the name of the Teamsters.

I knocked the door of the huge union with an appointment, not as a labor union man but a man, a Japanese business consultant for investigation of the American owner operator system

A man named Mr. Margun or something came out see me. His title was “communication coordinator”. The first word came out from his tongue was, “This is the first time a Japanese man like you ever visited our office for such a matter”

As I had him know of my purpose in advance, he was prepared with some papers. My first question was, “Are you or is your union in favor of the owner operator system?” He said “It is not a matter of whether in favor or not, it has more than a half century record.”

He showed me what was called, “Labor contract” written in small letters in some 200 pages. To my in the chapter 22, verse 1-18, in 12-page was written about the owner operator. My thought or question was why the independent trucker, owner, needs to join the union? He said there was a reason why. According to his explanation, there was a time in the States when the IRS(Internal Revenue Service) was trying to get more tax from the independent trucker from the viewpoint that some of them are not real independent only with the name, to escape from paying tax. This made some of the independent truckers to go to the union to protect themselves from the IRS. The company on the other side had a similar motivation of hiring the owner operators which exempt the management to pay for the welfare expenses for the permanent workers. It seemed to be the shelter for both the labor and management, so to speak. The labor contract of the union is limited only for those owner operators who themselves think they are not perfectly independent, I thought.

The union at the peak time, had some 1.8 million

members. Ever since the deregulation in the trucking industry was made in the regime of President Carter in 1982, the number fell down to 2400,000. I was told that the union has its members not only the truck drivers but nurses and even policemen.

When I returned to the hotel, I noticed one thing forgot to visit while in Washington DC, and that was to visit the ministry of Transportation. I thought of the two persons I met in Kyoto in the symposium together with Mr. Schaeffer of ATA. It was too late as I was supposed to fly next morning to Tennessee.