

\$200 Million and Growing

By Carol Strickland

At a time when "Team Tokyo" often stands convicted of greed and profiteering by American public opinion, U.S. nonprofit organizations are appearing as character witnesses to the largesse and vision of Japanese philanthropy in this country.

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The Big Four

The Japanese corporate foundations doing the most to win hearts and minds, as well as attack chronic problems in their host country, are American Honda Foundation, Hitachi, Toyota USA and Panasonic—all formed between 1984 and 1987. Although each of this Big Four has a different grantmaking focus, each shows willingness to take on gritty, grassroots problems that have frustrated American social and political agencies.

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With a roughly \$25 million endowment, the Hitachi Foundation and its Washington staff of seven spend

nearly \$2 million annually on education as well as three other areas: arts and museums, community and economic development, technology and human resource development. It seeks, according to Delwin Roy, "to put before other Japanese firms an example of innovative and unique philanthropy derived from the national and cultural origins of the benefactor." Since Hitachi is a multinational operation, this translates into an emphasis on programs highlighting global interdependence.

In a \$100,000 grant to the Coordinating Committee for Ellis Island, the Hitachi Foundation has supported a multicultural course called "Immigrants All...Americans All." Piloted in San Diego schools, the curriculum provides basic texts detailing the contributions of each ethnic group to America. Its aim: to defuse racism and instill pride in cultural identity. "The strength of our country is that we are a pluralistic society," notes the foundation's vice president/programs, Felicia Lynch. "We have to prepare Americans to appreciate the differences in themselves and in others."