

(This is a draft English translation of the original Japanese document.)

National Vision of a Newborn Japan
Construction of a Society Based on “Great Collaboration = Magnificent Coexistence“
A Nation-Building wherein Difference is the Source of Strength

September 24, 2005

Naoya Fujiwara, Economist
Fujiwara Office, Inc.

Chapter 1 The reality confronting Japan at the beginning of the 21st century

(1) Modern Japanese society, where people feel hopeless about the future

Having entered the 21st century, Japan currently faces formidable difficulties; globalization, the IT revolution, the principle of self-responsibility, etc. Characterized by these terms, our society is rapidly changing. Undergoing intensified competition on a global scale, our society has generated a tremendous increase in the stress level. At the same time, our society is confronted with a desperate situation, in which the people see a bleak future, no matter how long they continue struggling. The number of suicides per year exceeds thirty thousand. A company cannot get loans from banks any more if it records losses for two years in a row, no matter how well it may have performed in the past. Those who think they are winners today might become losers tomorrow. People feel completely insecure, however hard they may strive. They are left unrewarded, no matter how hard they try. They feel tired out and are left without any hope for the future. Such a hopeless situation has rapidly prevailed throughout the society. People have lost their pride. Bonds between people have been ruptured. The Japanese society has turned completely dry and barren, like grains of sand piled and left out in the winds.

(2) The global ecosystem in crisis

At the same time, global warming and numerous other environmental destructions have come into being, as a result of economic activity that uses resources, consumes food, and targets increased production and revenue, on the basis of conventional technology and extension thereof. Also, harmful effects to the human body have emerged as a reality, as a consequence of contact with or intake of harmful substances. AIDS and other diseases, that are difficult to deal with effectively, are epidemic around the world. We are now confronted with a crisis which threatens to fundamentally topple the global ecosystem. Back in the 20th

century, there were warnings too that a crisis was bound to occur, if we went on with the traditional way of mass production and mass consumption or with the large-scale destruction of the Earth's environment. Having just entered the 21st century, the Earth now faces that real crisis before our very eyes.

(3) “Autointoxication” of the 20th-century society

Naturally, it is necessary to address these problems regarding the society and the ecosystem. But, when I consider the reason why these problems arise one after another and, at the same time, are becoming difficult to deal with fundamentally, I am compelled to assume the following. I think that our present community suffers from “autointoxication” of the 20th-century society. That is, we are still running on a line which extends from the 20th-century version of the definition of success, technology, and power struggle. We are hard-pressed to make tremendous efforts on a daily basis in order to build a “better” world based on conventional wisdom. However, as a consequence, the society comes apart, the environment breaks down, and we get swept off our feet and carried away. That is, the present devastation of the society and of the Earth is a result of our “dead-serious” pursuit of the common sense of the 20th century; faster, in larger quantity, more accurate, more convenient, more competitive, etc. How ironic, isn't it?

(4) Limitations of “symptomatic treatment”

Facing such realities, we have two ways that we could take. One is to go on without changing the framework of the 20th century society and intensify the “symptomatic treatment” approach in order to avoid a critical moment. The other is to build a society that is free from crisis itself, by fundamentally re-constructing the social framework.

In my view, we have so far made enormous efforts on “symptomatic treatment” without fundamentally changing the existing social framework, based on a largely groundless sense of security that the critical moment is a long way off. We have hitherto experienced numerous countermeasures, policies, and movements, such as poverty programs, antipollution measures, welfare policies, medical policies, measures to address the aging population, environmental measures, and peace movements. We must admit that these measures, no matter how noble their ideals may be, have functioned in reality as “symptomatic treatment” in order to maintain the framework of the 20th century society.

But now politics, calling for a “small government” as a direct result of fiscal deficit, is about to withdraw from all kinds of “symptomatic treatments” against social contradictions, as shown by the curtailment of spending on welfare, medical care, and support on the socially vulnerable. And now the crises of society and of environment are approaching the decisive

moment. Now, we must choose the other way, *i.e.*, build a society free from crisis itself, by fundamentally re-constructing the social framework. No matter how hard that may seem, that is the only way we could survive.