

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

Chapter 2 What is a society without social and environmental crises like?

(1) Infinite stability stands for day-to-day fulfillment

Infinite life is synonymous with life that is complete on a day-to-day basis. That is, in a world where stability lasts infinitely without crises, we are not tossed about by problems carried over from yesterday. Problems are not put off till the next day. Each day is complete without strain and waste. In a world of infinite stability, we do not push ourselves too hard or make crooked moves, relying on “symptomatic treatments”. We do not take a winning-is-everything attitude, resorting to sheer force. We are not overwhelmed by yesterday’s sorrows. We do not send our anxieties and grudges on to tomorrow. We make our lives as full and complete as possible each and every day.

(2) The scene the last winners will see

Having rushed through the very hectic 20th century, the Japanese people today are putting spurs to each other, demanding themselves to run even faster. But what is it that the present-day Japanese people are seeking the most? The ability to run even faster? The capacity to memorize even more? Or the strength to fight even more fiercely?

In this world, indeed there still are people looking for those kinds of things. But give it a closer look. Those people might be on the winning side temporarily and be confident that they could still win the race based on 20th-century values. However, they could instantly tumble down and be on the losing side. Their company might start corporate restructuring and lay-off, or they might suffer from a serious illness as a result of overworking themselves. Today, don’t we see such scenes all too often? These days, isn’t everyone experiencing such stuff to a larger or lesser extent?

When the bipolarization between winners and losers of the modern age goes all the way till the end, what will the people see? More and more people are gradually beginning to realize. They will see one single winner standing on top of the grudges of a countless number of losers. But even the lone winner’s foothold will be undermined by those grudges. In the end, only a deserted, barren expanse of land will remain. That’s the scene the people will see.

(3) What are the Japanese people seeking now?

Well then, what are the Japanese people seeking now? To put it in a nutshell, I would say “security”; the desire to live today radiantly to the fullest degree, from the bottom of one’s heart, without dwelling on yesterday’s anxieties or worrying about tomorrow. The 20th century, which has undergone unduly violent changes, has ended and the people are seeking

anew for stability and peace. On top of that, they want to live feeling a great sense of security. Aren't these the values the Japanese are sincerely seeking for from the heart now?

At the same time, it seems to me that the people "want to forget" this Heisei era, which has been painful and full of hardships. Just as survivors of war hesitate to tell their war experiences, it seems the people want a way out of and "want to forget" the hard times of the Heisei era soon. That is because many people have involuntarily become victimizers, even as they are victims, in these hard times. So Japan today is just about to have an opportunity to start again from scratch, after putting all our grudges and ill feelings behind us.

(4) 20th-century Japan has fully achieved "success" already

Generally speaking, one of the most important jobs of a leader is to define, in concrete terms, what "success" is for his/her particular organization or country. Japan today needs a definition of success which is different from that in the 20th century. It is fair to say that success for Japan, from the days of opening its ports in the late Edo period to the end of the 20th century, was solely to win the fight with world powers; at times, vying for victory in war; at other times, contending in trade; at still other times, competing for the amount of wealth. I think that is how Japan has kept up its energy and grown to this day.

Indeed, Japan today gives the impression of being down and out, looked down on from the rest of the world. However, Japan in reality is on par with or even more advanced than the Western powers with which it has competed since the Meiji era, in quite a few aspects especially in terms of economic power and people's living standards. Above all, Japan is a country with one of the world's highest level of trade surplus. Despite the severe recession, delicacies from mountains and seas can be found abundantly in town at amazingly low prices. Minuscule sound-recorders, whose buttons are hard to push without the help of a magnifier, will continuously record speeches and music for hours.

When we look at such reality and recall the important lesson of "know contentment", while Japan today may still have areas that are incomplete or needs to be fixed, we should judge that Japan has admirably accomplished its national goals for success since the opening of its ports in the late Edo period. Yes. Japan has already achieved its national goals for success up to the 20th century admirably.

(5) When the definition of "success" changes

That is why Japan today needs a new definition of success. To put it the other way around, following the end of the Showa era and having entered the 21st century, in only about fifteen years hitherto, why has Japan become so shabby? Why has Japan lost its energy, causing all its people to live groggily? It's because Japan has been unable to have a definition of success,

since it entered the Heisei era. In other words, after entering the Heisei era, Japan has kept on running by sheer force without exactly knowing what constitutes success. As a result, Japan has been worn out, and the country and its people are adrift and close to running up on the rocks.

Yes. What Japan today needs is to change the definition of “success” or, perhaps stated more accurately, to define “success” for a new Japan. Newborn Japan will begin from redefining “success”. I have termed the definition of success for newborn Japan ‘Construction of a Society Based on “Great Collaboration = Magnificent Coexistence” --- A Nation-Building wherein Difference is the Source of Strength’. And I want to make the next ten years a decade for building the infrastructure for that society.