

Kaze, April 2019

What do we need to create sustainable society?

Saburo KATO

I wrote in my previous essay that we may not be able to avert catastrophe if the current political and economic situation continues. To my essay, various comments were provided from our members. One appreciated it and said, "It was as if what I vaguely felt these days appeared in writing!". On the other hand, a young member of ours wrote that, although she basically agrees with my anxiety, she also worries some negative effects of the essay may have on younger generations. Her concern, which I think is quite natural as a mother of three children, is that those in their thirties and younger may become pessimistic about their future and stop their efforts of creating a better society.

Of course, I do not at all welcome the catastrophic situation, but I am really worrying what the world big powers are heading for. How can we change the current trend? What a desirable society is like? Here, I would like to share my image of the society to be created in the future.

1. Basic concept

- 1) The real situation of the debts/burdens on the environment should be fully acknowledged both quantitatively and qualitatively. Such debts were accumulated unintentionally by past generations in their pursuit of an affluent, convenient and comfortable society. At the same time, many people, specifically sensible politicians, should be aware of our responsibility of clearing up the debts by the end of this century and of restoring healthy environment for all living things on the earth.
- 2) Any organization (central and local governments, business firms of all sizes, citizens groups, etc.), whatever types of their business be, should put limit to all possible environmental debts to be incurred by their business activities. They should make every effort to confine them within the capacity of the environment. To ensure its legitimacy, put them down clearly in legal documents (the constitutions, laws, articles of incorporation, etc.).

2. Values to be shared with

- 1) Make a sharp distinction between fair "appetite" and excessive "greediness", and recognize that greediness is the real enemy for a stable society.
- 2) Realize our responsibility of foreseeing possible effects on future generations (children, grandchildren, etc.) before taking any action either public or private.

- 3) Sincerely accept limitations in either daily and business activities, learn to be fulfilled, and enjoy leading a simple life.
- 4) Put importance on sharing natural resources with other creatures on this planet.

3. Politics

- 1) Along with the progress of globalization, free competition has been welcomed to promote social development. In future society, however, a mid-term (5-10 years) and long-term (over 10 years) perspective will be needed for sound policymaking. In any policy area, policy assessment is to be made on a mid- and long-term basis, and only those that pass the assessment should be chosen for actual implementation.
- 2) Election of national lawmakers should be considered not only geographical areas, but the balance of gender, expertise, age, etc. should also be taken into account.

4. Economy

- 1) Renewable energies should replace fossil and nuclear energies in every industry of the world.
- 2) Recycle materials should be used basically for any production, and energy and resources should be saved as much as possible. Before purchasing anything, we should thoroughly examine if we really need it. When introducing a new technology or a system into our society, it should be fairly assessed from environmental and social viewpoints.
- 3) In carrying out economic activities (macro and micro), growth (of GDP) should not be pursued, but only sustainability should be aimed.
- 4) When designing and implementing economic policies, ensure equity and fairness among people in current era and also for the future generations.

5. Education

- 1) At school, finite nature of the earth should be instilled in the minds of students using various measures.
- 2) What (idea, technologies, form of industries) actually caused the devastation of global environment in the 20th and 21st centuries and brought about tremendous damages on human societies as well as to the ecosystems of this planet? Detailed analysis should be made, both internationally and domestically, and the results of the analysis should be clearly explained to all citizens of the world.

What do you think of my thoughts in the above? Were they too strict to follow? If the catastrophe becomes a real issue, then those survived would accept the above rules quite easily like Japanese people just after the WWII smoothly accepted the abolition of

social rules of the former society (emperor sovereignty, control of speech, gender segregation, zaibatsu, etc.).