

Presentation

Creative Collaboration for a Resilient World: A Perspective from Japan

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Introduciton

The difficulties of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic were not limited to the major medical and epidemiological challenges posed in the form of the growing health hazards of unknown pathogens. Because of the present lack of vaccines and efficacious antivirals, the only way to prevent the epidemic spread of the disease is to cut off the ability for the infection to spread. However, this prevention measure also entailed halting normal social and economic activity. Many are in danger of having a reduced standard of living and even threats to their survival as a result of the decrease in income they have experienced due to the economic stagnation. The restrictions required to prevent the epidemic disease spread and the necessity of economic activity for survival are in conflict, and we are nevertheless unable to control COVID-19.

Some developments have emerged that can help respond more effectively to this unprecedented disaster. Particularly, technologies to enable noncontact communication have become widespread, and new avenues for economic growth are appearing, such as the accelerated commercialization of virtual reality. However, these avenues are also faced with inevitable challenges that come when new technologies and economic activities are born: the gap between those who can enjoy this new life and those who cannot. Here the pandemic is emphasizing the difficulty of creating a society where no one is left behind, which encapsulates

the philosophy of the SDGs.

In this presentation, the impact of the spread of COVID-19 infection in Japan and the response of the Japanese government are investigated, and the vulnerability of globalization, a premise of contemporary daily life, is examined in the context of the pandemic. I also consider ideal strategies for globalization and how they enable the contradictory efforts to prevent damage caused by infectious diseases without aggravating the damage due to poverty.

Unpredictable disasters, such as pandemics, are inescapable. For this reason, it is necessary to prepare ways for people to live with dignity, even in the event of a sudden disaster. Because such disasters are unpredictable, it is inevitable that individuals will suffer considerable damage in the event of a disaster. Therefore, it is crucial to work toward preventing such disasters and increasing resilience to recover quickly from the damage.

In this presentation, I adopt the concept of resilience presented by Zolli and Healy (2012) considering the requirements of a more resilient global system that draws lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. For developing a vision of a resilient world, the keynote speech by Professor Mine is an important foundation, with its idea of a new community known as Afrasia and vision of the world in 100 years. In an effort to develop a world where everyone has the freedom to live with dignity, we should think about how we as individuals can work toward the change.

1. Impact of COVID-19: The Case of Japan

On October 25, an extraordinary investigation committee based in the private sector released a report that analyzed the Japanese government's response to the spread of the novel coronavirus infection epidemiologically.¹

The report defined the Japanese model as follows.

The approach of the Japanese government was intended to achieve both suppression of the infection its spread with only limited economic damage, enabled by combining behavior-modification policies centered on individual case tracking with cluster measures, self-restraint requests without penalties, and the granting of leave requests without employing legally enforceable behavior restriction measures.

The situation in Japan till August 2020 was as follows:

- (1) Japan succeeded in keeping its mortality rate per capita low, despite its high aging rate.
- (2) The Japanese economy has barely held up, and social stability has been maintained

¹ アジア・パシフィック・イニシアティブ『新型コロナ対応民間臨時調査会 調査・検証報告書』ディスカバー・トゥエンティワン 2020年10月25日 (Asia Pacific Initiative “Temporary Investigation Committee for New Corona Response Survey/Verification Report” Discover Twenty One, October 25, 2020)

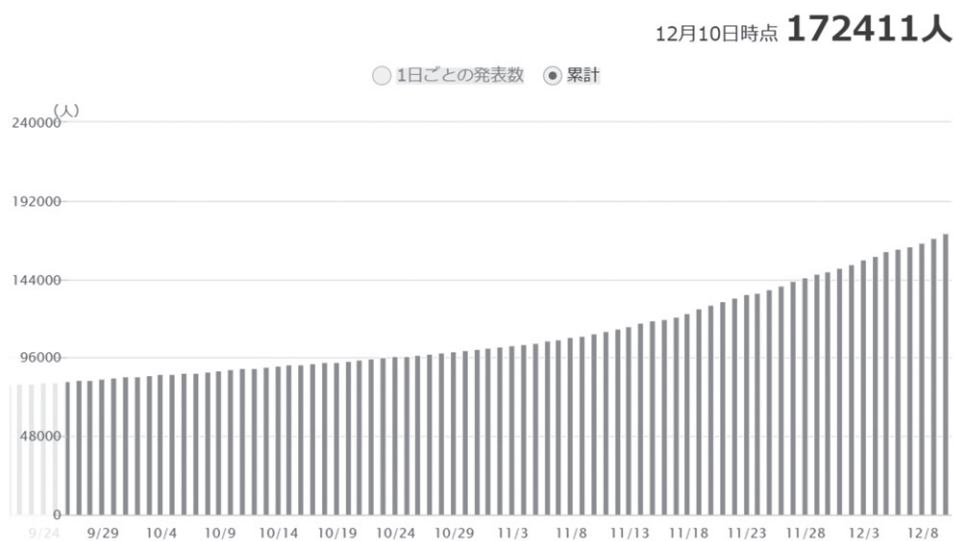
through a soft lockdown, without the use of coercion.

The Commission's report stated that the government could proceed with the following three points, taking the advice of experts on how to successfully control mortality.

- (1) Early detection and early response to clusters
- (2) Early diagnosis of patients, enhancement of intensive care for severely ill patients, and provision of secured medical care provision system
- (3) Behavior changes among citizens

Conversely, problems remain, such as the insufficient capacity for PCR tests, lack of human resources at the public health centers that perform actual measures as cluster tracking, and inefficient administrative systems that, for instance, require data on the level of COVID-19 transmission and the number of individuals being infected through handwritten notes or faxing. The report noted that the current medical system remains vulnerable to the spread of infection, and further the medical care system remains at risk of collapse.

日本国内の感染者数（NHKまとめ）



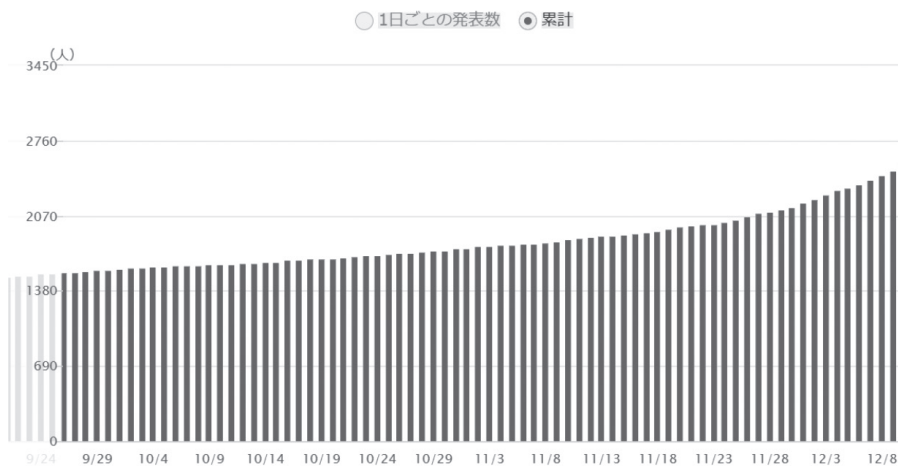
Number of people infected with of COVID-19 in Japan (cumulative)

<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/special/coronavirus/data-all/>

As of August, it was thought that measures called the "Japanese model" could suppress the increase in serious illness and death to some extent, but it is thought that the third wave of infection spread began in November. Therefore, it is difficult to control the infection without taking new measures.

日本国内の死者数（NHKまとめ）

12月10日時点 **2513人**

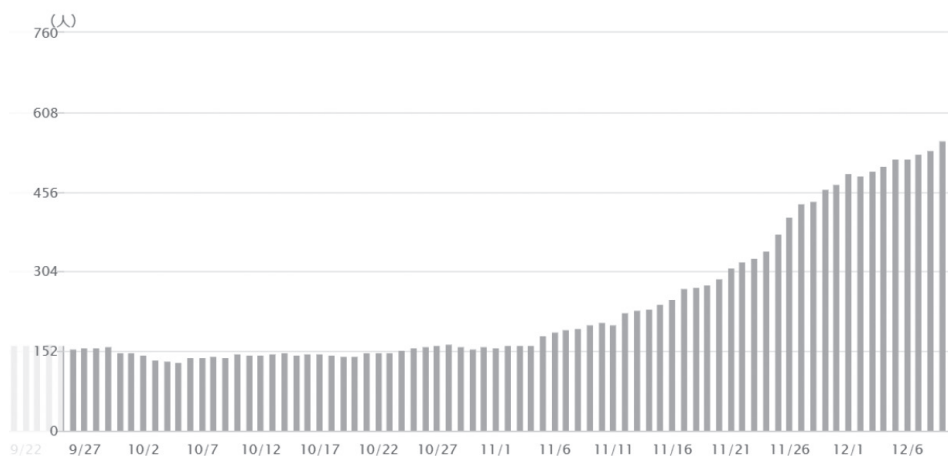


Number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Japan (cumulative)

<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/special/coronavirus/data-all/>

日本国内の重症者数

12月10日時点 **543人**



Number of Seriously Ill of COVID-19 in Japan (cumulative)

<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/special/coronavirus/data-all/>

The number of daily deaths has been on the rise since November, and a total of 2,513 deaths have been reported as of December 10. In addition, the total number of seriously ill is 543, which has also increased since November.

The committee survey found that the economic and social situation was barely holding up, and since August, economic indicators have been deteriorating. It has become clear that the victims are increasing due to refraining from going out as an infection control measure and restricting economic activities.

The *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* reported on the deterioration of the employment situation as follows:

The employment situation continues to gradually deteriorate. The unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) in August was 3.0%, up 0.1 points from the previous month. This is the first time the rate has reached 3% in three years and three months. The number of the unemployed is 200. The number of employees exceeds 10,000, and the number of unemployed individuals has increased. Additionally, the number of nonregular employees, such as part-timers and contract employees, has decreased. It was at a low level.²

According to the investigation of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), from the end of January to the 6th of this month, the number of people who lost their jobs due to dismissal or "stop hiring" was 70,242.³ Since the number of people can be grasped by the government office, it seems that there are actually more people who have lost their jobs. The number of people who lost their jobs due to the effects of the new coronavirus exceeded 10,000 on May 21, 50,000 on August 31, 60,000 on September 23. It keeps increasing.

The National Police Agency reported that the number of suicides each month was less than the previous year's figures from January to June, but it increased for each of the 4 months beginning in July, reaching 2,153 in the preliminary figures for October. Of these, 1,302 were male, an increase of 21.3% from the same month of the previous year, and 851 were females, an increase of 82.6% from the same month of the previous year.⁴

The Japan Suicide Countermeasures Promotion Center presented the following analysis in an emergency report.⁵

Women's suicide can have many causes, such as economic problems, work problems, domestic violence, child-rearing worries, long-term care fatigue, and mental illness. The causal factors are becoming more serious, and these may be affecting the number of female suicides. For example, the decrease in nonregular employment has been most remarkable in women, and coronavirus has led to a large number of women losing their jobs, which has led to suicide for some.

November has witnessed the largest increase in COVID-19 infections in Japan, clearly demonstrating that the crisis of the pandemic has not yet been overcome.

2 『日本経済新聞』 <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZO64513520S0A001C2MM0000/>

3 『日本経済新聞』 <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZO65990940Z01C20A1EE8000>

4 <https://www.npa.go.jp/safetylife/seianki/jisatsu/R02/zantei0210.pdf>

5 https://3112052d-38f7-4601-af43-2555a2470f1f.filesusr.com/ugd/0c32a8_91d15d66d1bf41a69a1f41e8064f4b2b.pdf

2. Recovery from Unanticipated Disaster

Because of the pandemic, the following has occurred:

- Increased negative health outcomes due to the collapse of the medical system
- Restriction of rights due to infection prevention measures (movement restrictions/lockdowns) and invasion of privacy stemming from a strengthened national surveillance system
- Stagnant manufacturing and distribution due to infection prevention measures (restriction of the movement of people/lockdown) and stagnant economic activity
- Export stagnation due to supply chain damage/manufacturing line stagnation, with a shortage of supplies (e.g., mask shortages)
 - ⇒ Evaporation of inbound consumption
 - ⇒ Decrease in personal consumption
- The gap between those who can resist economic stagnation (greater financial resources) and those who cannot
 - ⇒ Aggravated effects of poverty for those with fewer resources to deal with economic stagnation
 - ⇒ Discrimination and suppression regarding infection risk (self-restraint police) and social divisions

Unlike centuries ago during the plague in Europe, modern medical science has begun to analyze pathogenicity at the genetic level, develop treatments, and manufacture vaccines. However, the spread of the infection before the development of effective treatments has propelled the use of medical services, such as hospitals, beyond their capacity.

Where medical care is not able to manage, social infection prevention must be strengthened. However, there has been widespread concern that the enforcement of behavioral restrictions in a lockdown scenario would lead to a strengthening of government surveillance and infringe on the rights and privacy of private citizens.

Yuval Harari has called for a way to avoid strengthening public surveillance in these circumstances.

Centralized monitoring and harsh punishments aren't the only way to make people comply with beneficial guidelines. When people are told the scientific facts, and when people trust public authorities to tell them these facts, citizens can do the right thing even without a Big Brother watching over their shoulders. A self-motivated and well-informed population is usually far more powerful and effective than a policed, ignorant population.⁶

⁶ Yuval Noah Harari, "The world after coronavirus", *Financial Times*, March 20, 2020.
<https://www.ft.com/content/19d90308-6858-11ea-a3c9-1fe6fedcca75>

Social measures for infection control have caused even greater economic damage. This unanticipated pandemic has come to be the basis for our daily life, that is, the form of an unchanging universal life, presupposing an economic arrangement in line with globalized neoliberalism. Here, globalization has been shown to be vulnerable.

A human security approach should be taken against vulnerabilities of this kind. Human security approaches routinely address real-life, unsafe situations, and foreseeable unsafety, and in the event of an unexpected disaster, they can prepare for unforeseen, sudden failure. Actions of this kind can increase resilience to allow early recovery.

Prime Minister Suga's speech at the 75th UN General Assembly notes that the pandemic is a human security issue.⁷

The spread of the coronavirus is a human security crisis, posing a threat to the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of people across the globe. The guiding principle for us to overcome this crisis must be "leave no one behind."

Looking forward, we need to "build back better" from the COVID-19 pandemic and create a flexible yet resilient society where the SDGs have been achieved and a virtuous cycle of environment and growth is generated. The ongoing crisis is heavily impacting the education of children and the youth who shape the future. It is also affecting women among others. In order to create a better and more inclusive society, there are three points that I consider to be of paramount importance.

Zolli defined resilience as "the capacity of a system, enterprise, or a person to maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances."⁸ Here, the following requirements must be met to foster social resilience:

These elements—beliefs, values, and habits of mind; trust and cooperation; cognitive diversity; strong communities, translational leadership, and adaptive governance—make up the rich soil in which social resilience grows. Taken together, they suggest new ways to bolster the resilience of communities and organizations, and the people who live within them.⁹

How can we meet these requirements?

⁷ https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/unp_a/page4e_001095.html

⁸ Andrew Zolli and Ann Marie Healy, *Resilience: Why Things Bounce Back*, Simon & Schuster, 2013, p. 7

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 15–16

3. Action for a Resilient World

How can we change to adapt to the situation and produce a new normal? Let us consider the factors that will encourage action to support human security.

First, let us recall the core values of human security: survival, livelihood, and dignity. To ensure survival against disasters such as infectious diseases, a population must understand and trust scientific consensus on risk and take action as a result.

NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) analyzed 200,000 academic reports of medical and epidemiological research on the COVID pandemic using artificial intelligence. This has elucidated the state of creative collaboration within the scientific community. However, the precise policy that should emerge from these scientific findings remains an open question.

For example, in the United States (US) politics, a division became prominent, where the political party in power refused to enact policy based on the scientific knowledge, and in some cases, to perform personal health-promoting behavior, such as wearing a mask. Other issues, such as assigning blame for the pandemic to China, criticism of the World Health Organization, and withdrawal from the international health cooperation regime, have been features of the political landscape within the US.

To protect livelihoods during the COVID pandemic, economic reforms to encourage noncontact services, new working styles including remote work, and improvements to the supply chain have been considered. In Japan, the social reform concept Society 5.0¹⁰ has been implemented, prioritizing information and communication technology. Moreover, the Japanese government is accelerating social reform through the creation of a new normal in the wake of the onset of the COVID pandemic. The government announced its Policy Toward the Construction of New Everyday Life by Utilizing New Technology on October 9, 2020, in the following way.¹¹

To respond quickly and effectively to the novel coronavirus, the introduction and dissemination of new technologies possessed by Japan are key, and it is important for both the public and private sectors to accelerate their efforts in this area.

In particular, in daily life, infection prevention technology is becoming widespread in all contexts, including workplaces, schools, hospitals, public transportation arenas, shops, and event venues, and business practices and services themselves are using new technology.

To effectively promote these efforts, the Cabinet Secretariat's New Coronavirus Infectious Disease Control Promotion Office, the Cabinet Secretariat's IT Comprehensive Strategy Office, and the Cabinet Office's Policy Director (in charge of science and

¹⁰ On January 22, 2016, the 5th Basic Plan for 2016–2020 was approved by the Cabinet.

“It refers to a new society following the hunting society (Society 1.0), agricultural society (Society 2.0), industrial society (Society 3.0), and information society (Society 4.0). The concept of Society 5.0 is that a human-centered society that achieves both economic development and solution of social issues through a system that highly integrates cyber space (virtual space) and physical space (real space).” https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/society5_0/

¹¹ <https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/201009shingijutu.html>

technology/innovation) will collaborate with each ministry and agency to make new COVID-19 policy. We will collect information on new technologies for use in preventing viruses and present demonstration projects that use them. Further, we will promote their effective use and dissemination.

This will resolve the social issues that have become increasingly apparent due to the novel coronavirus and propel new innovations that can realize Society 5.0.

In response to these economic and social changes, conflict of opinions regarding the pros and cons of change will arise due to differences in values and beliefs, and disparities between those who can take advantage of change and those who cannot will be exaggerated. For everyone to enjoy the freedom to live with dignity, it is necessary to acknowledge various ways of perceiving change and to take care not to disadvantage any person or group.

Conclusion

What approaches can bring about a more resilient world to protect and promote the human security values of survival, livelihood, and dignity? I believe that this approach presents a major challenge to dignity. The challenge here is to increase adherence to the idea that society should enable everyone to live with dignity.

As we face this challenge, we can recall the words of today's keynote speaker, Professor Mine: "Looking at the history of humankind, there have been many times when important policy changes have been realized on the basis of moral correctness."¹² We should bear this in mind. As a moral basis for making a necessary policy shift in response to our contemporary world, I reaffirm the idea that society should enable everyone to live with dignity.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of Soka Education, foresaw an era of humanitarian competition that incorporates the development stage of humankind in his successful work, *A Geography of Human Life*. This book was published in 1903, at a moment when competition among the imperialist powers was intensifying. Makiguchi described the humanitarian method as follows.

The important thing is the setting of a goal of well being and protection of all people, including oneself but not at the increase of self interest alone. In other words, the aim is the betterment of others and in doing so, one chooses ways that will yield personal benefit as well as benefit to others. It is a conscious effort to create a more harmonious community life, and it will take considerable time for us to achieve.¹³

12 峯陽一 『2100年の世界地図——アフラシアの時代』 岩波新書 2019年 p.134

13 Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Dayle M. Bethel ed., *A Geography of Human Life*, English Edition, Caddo Gap Press (San Francisco) 2002/7/1, 286 p.

Makiguchi considered this approach to be possible at the interstate level, so long as this type of life was realized among educated people.

The idea of Soka (value creation), which originates in Makuuchi's thinking, is expressed as not "seeking one's own happiness on the misery of others." This is in line with the philosophy of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. It also resonates with the following call given by Professor Mine describing a way to overcome colonialism.

The basis for bundling Afrasia is the recognition that colonial rule should not be repeated. What should be presented there is a historical determination and wisdom that, in retrospect of the colonial rule by the Western powers, we do not deprive others of their freedom, do not parasitize, and do not seek hegemony.¹⁴

Since the United Nations has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for no one to be left behind, we may say that this idea has reached universal acceptance in the 21st century.

However, the problem of conflict among nations remains, or the conflict seeking freedom for all to live with dignity. Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic alone, at a national level, their words and deeds prioritize the interests of one country over the safety of people in others.

It must be remembered that the ideology that denies the existence of those who do not accept our justice, as represented by IS, continues to have great influence. How we deal with ideas that reject others' values is a major challenge for us.

As Professor Mine shows, we must "cultivate a democratic culture on a global scale that celebrates diversity and enjoys conflicts and intersections of different opinions."¹⁵

Even as the desire to share new values remains in progress, it is necessary to take action to realize such new values as well. Regardless of human ideology, we as a species are equally endangered by viral infections, such as COVID-19. We must ensure human security by encouraging cooperation as human beings based on this simple fact.

A range of task forces have helped bring about necessary changes. The COVAX Facility,¹⁶ to support the spread of vaccines, has recently drawn greater attention. Professor Daisaku Higashi of Sophia University has also proposed an approach to COVID-19 in relation to human security and characterized the COVAX Facility in the following way:

When an effective and safe vaccine for corona is in the process of development, 170 countries have already announced their participation in the new global framework of the COVAX Facility to disseminate the vaccine worldwide, and Japan officially participated.

14 峯, *ibid.* p. 149

15 峯, *ibid.* p. 184

16 <https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility>

Expressed.

Regarding COVAX, China announced its participation in October, but the US and Russia have not yet participated (as of October 21). It is also expected that Japan, which maintains good relations with both countries, will persistently encourage the US and Russia to participate in this framework.¹⁷

The COVAX Facility seeks to secure and deliver vaccines to protect all people, without following the speculative approach of any great power that seeks to use vaccine development as a means to pursue its own interests. Here, we see a type of global governance in action.

In our world, the security dilemma is prominent even during the human crisis of this pandemic. We should recall the utility of global governance to overcome the dilemma of interstate relations. Creative collaboration is also important here, in terms of restraint and cooperation at a multidimensional level, from individuals to international organizations. Through repeating these practices, it will be possible to alter the progress of human history for the better. We should continue to take on this challenge.

17 東大作「コロナ禍を人間の安全保障で～世界的解決に向けた日本の役割～」(日本国際問題研究所「研究レポート」2020年10月28日) [HIGASHI, Daisaku, [Research Report] Corona in Human Security—Japan's Role in a Global Solution] <https://www.jiia.or.jp/column/post-15.html>