

## Japan's measures against a society of fewer children and more aging population.

Kenji Koshiyama, Eiji Oura, Masao Watanabe

Toyama Association of Agricultural and Rural Medicine, Japan

### To lay stress on the roles of Agriculture

In Japan, agriculture has long been performed in the circumstances with as well abundant greeneries as every seasonal scenery suitable for the life-industry (I describe Agriculture as life-industry).

And we still preserve a beautiful ecology, a lot of lives in our agriculture.

After the Second World War, Japan has encountered an unusual progress of economy until recently but our agriculture and forestry have begun to walk toward decline. That is to say, a lot of people in the farm areas moved into the urban areas resulting in a decrease of the cultivated fields and some of them have tended to lie wasted.

A considerable part of the primary industries have shifted to secondary or tertiary ones. Consequently agricultural and forestal industries are now faced with a crucial turning point.

A rapid development of economy for 30 years has brought us the drastic material civilizations and changed people's senses for food, clothing, and shelter, hobbies and

leisure and so on. Thus, most of Japanese people seem to be conscious that they belong to the middle class.

On the other hand, due to lowering birth rate and prolonged life-span Japan has entered a society of fewer children accompanied with more aging population.

That would impose a crucial response on our country and it would also be the big responsibility for medical fields not to overlook those situations.

From the aspects of men, goods, and money our politics, administrations have tried and operated to resolve so many problems including health, medical care, welfare for some years. However I would like to put the priority on training capable technicians who can well cope with the hard problems.

Not to mention WHO's proposal, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, security for life and health originates from physical, mental and environmental viewpoints. When I analyze these three viewpoints I feel all of them are getting worse and weakening,

though such a tendency should be in common with so called developed countries. I think it is particularly a conspicuous phenomenon in Japan.

Briefly, people's life-span has prolonged so much but the vivid aged people are not in proportion.

What we concern about is that medical costs for the aged are increasing year after year and people would have unrests for a likely dementia and the others. The countermeasures for cancer, brain disease, heart trouble, diabetes, liver trouble, and AIDS are strongly required now.

Next, what I want to emphasize is the decline of humanity which might have been led from material civilization, preference for a economic development and that brought us lack of the thoughts of gratitude, good manner, courtesy, patience, saving and so on. Though I recognize the gap between the older generation and the younger.

Moreover, people's claims for freedom, equality, various rights tend to be selfish so that the feeling of togetherness or co-operation has been weakened.

At schools or workplaces we see extraordinary diseases, accidents often outbreak.

Such mental functions as pleasure, anger, love, enjoyment are mostly controlled by cerebrum, so these functions are usually difficult to be quantified and aren't fitted for logical, rational scientific mechanism.

I think there lies the reason that the atmosphere of our society is going to lose it's warmth, friendliness, favor and so on.

Medical fields deeply concern environment, though it is regrettable that their behavior

to it tend to depend on the other regions of science and have less interests.

We can distinguish environment between natural and social one.

So we can not neglect any one of home-life, local society, school, workplace but the old roles performed by home and local people seem to have diminished or ruined nowadays.

Mass Media are covering day after day so many unsound affairs broke out in those places and unrests, fears haunted.

Regarding natural environment, we have a lot of problems at the urging of solution. Here, please let me omit.

Japan has grown into a developed country only in a 20 to 30 years.

They talk about people's life-span, attentive medical treatment and so on.

On the other hand, some people suffer from loneliness caused by one man house-hold or fundamental actions of A.D.L. (Actions of Daily Life) besides, the situation of fewer children and more aging population might have worsened the conditions.

As I said previously, the decline of humanity relates to selfishness, lack of solidarity, lack of co-operative activity, lack of the thought of gratitude. At last, without dreams and hopes many poor-minded aged people have increased rapidly in recent years.

### **Agriculture's roles**

In the process of the economic development, agriculture-one of the primary industries handed over it's seat to others, so many farmers went out of our sight.

But with Japanese Government's protection policies people are assured of food especially rice and Japan's agricultural co-operative association (famous abroad as Nokyo) still has the powerful systems and the roles.

Japanese cultures concerning food, clothing, and shelter have been traditionally based on the agriculture which would have created people's life and health for a long-long time.

In that sense, thinking from the agricultural viewpoints I would like to contribute to health problems.

It is unable to eliminate agriculture from human being.

I think agriculture's roles are as follows,

- (1) Security for food
- (2) Prevention of land
- (3) Prevention of disaster
- (4) Preservation of environment
- (5) Succession of traditional culture
- (6) Cultivation of humanity
- (7) Promotion of spiritual culture
- (8) Thought of Gods and Buddha

With the full of sciences and technologies,

now, we live in a century of prosperous material civilizations. In which economy would take priority over all others.

However, some kinds of selfish thoughts of pursuing honors, status, profits are bringing a bad effect on health and life.

Not only for human being but also for all the creatures, a crisis is going to happen, I think.

Agriculture has another description as "life industry" . Because of repeatedly tilling the earth, growing the crops fitted to each area.

I suppose it has a skill to revive many things we have lost physically, mentally and environmentally.

All the Japanese cultures, to begin with food, clothing and shelter have been derived from agriculture that we can evaluate to be a precious educational culture born in nature and acquired how to care about health and life.

From our primary industries we should learn about measures against a society characterized by fewer children and more aging population.

Table 1 Decrease of the farmhouse (unit : 1000)

Year	Number of farmhouses	full-time farmhouses	the first kind of farmer who has a second job ①	the second kind of farmer who has a second job ②
1947	5,909	3,274	1,684	950
1950	6,176	3,086	1,753	1,336
1955	6,042	2,105	2,274	1,663
1960	6,056	2,078	2,036	1,942
1965	5,664	1,218	2,080	2,365
1970	5,402	844	1,814	2,743
1975	4,953	616	1,258	3,077
1980	4,661	623	1,002	3,035
1985	3,314	365	758	2,057
1990	2,970	318	520	1,976

①the farmhouse which agriculture income is larger than the ohter jobs

②the farmhouse which agriculture income is smaller than the ohter jobs

Fig. 1 The change of the numbers of the farmhouses

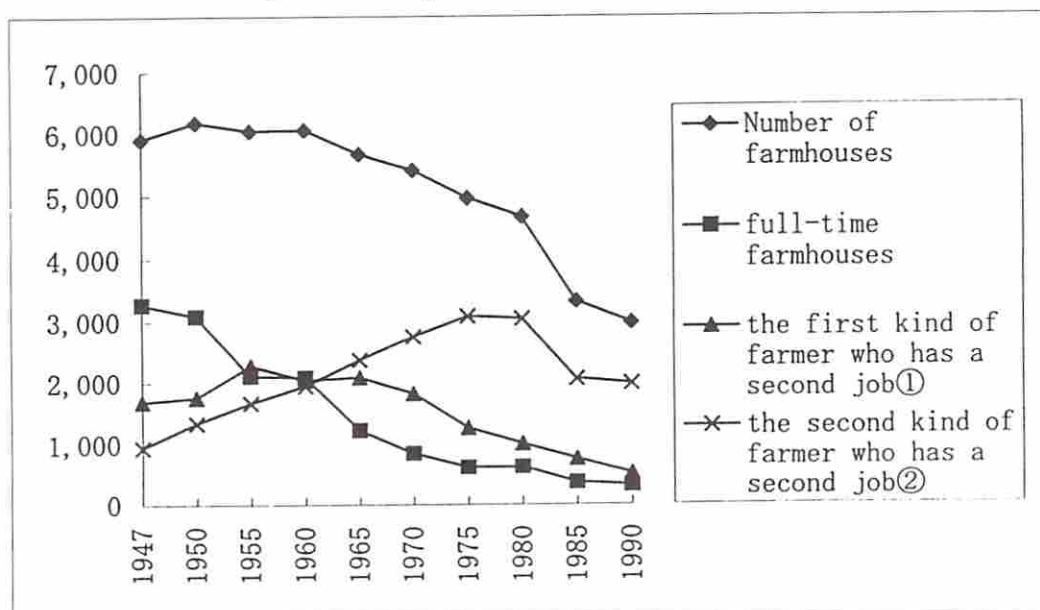


Table 2 Rate of Population

	①	②	③
1960	36.5	18.7	15.4
1965	30.3	15.6	11.6
1970	25.4	14.9	9.9
1975	20.7	12.3	7.1
1980	18.3	10.7	6.0
1985	16.0	9.5	5.2
1990	14.0	8.4	4.6

- ①the rate of the population who live in rural areas
- ②the rate of the population engaged in agriculture at all
- ③the rate of the population engaged in agriculture mainly

Fig. 2 The change of ratio of the aging population

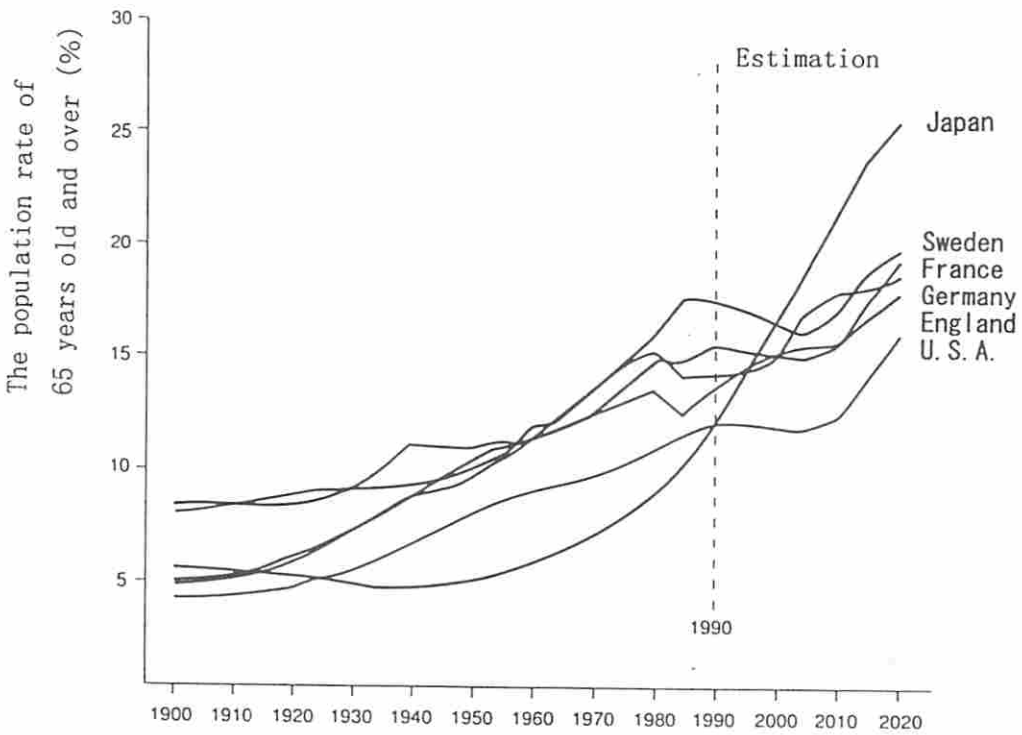


Table 3 Estimation of the ratio of the aging population

country	Year	
	1990	2025
Japan	12.0	27.4
U.S.A.	12.6	18.5
England	15.7	19.4
Germany	14.6	20.5
France	14.0	21.2
Sweden	17.8	20.9

\* Over 65 years old

Fig. 3 The decrease of the birth rate

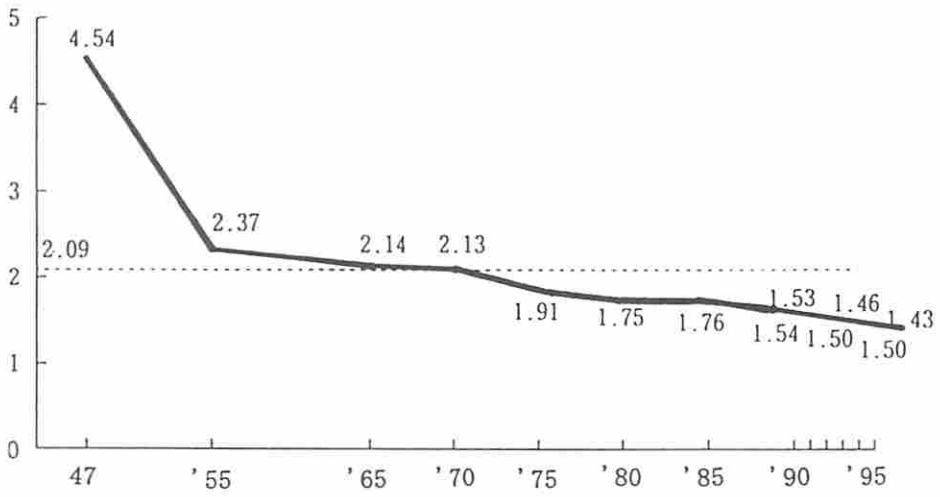


Table 4 The average life span of some countries

	Year	male	female
Japan	1995	76.36	82.84
U.S.A.	1992	72.30	79.10
England	1993	79.10	78.90
Germany	'91~'93	72.47	79.01
France	1991	72.91	81.13
Sweden	1994	76.08	81.38

Fig. 4 The average life span in Japan

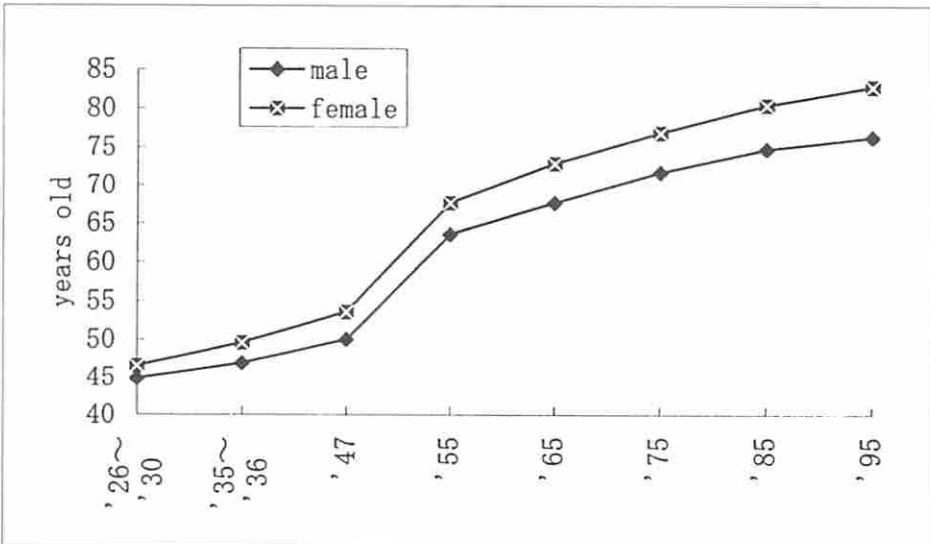


Fig. 5 Trends of death rates by five leading causes

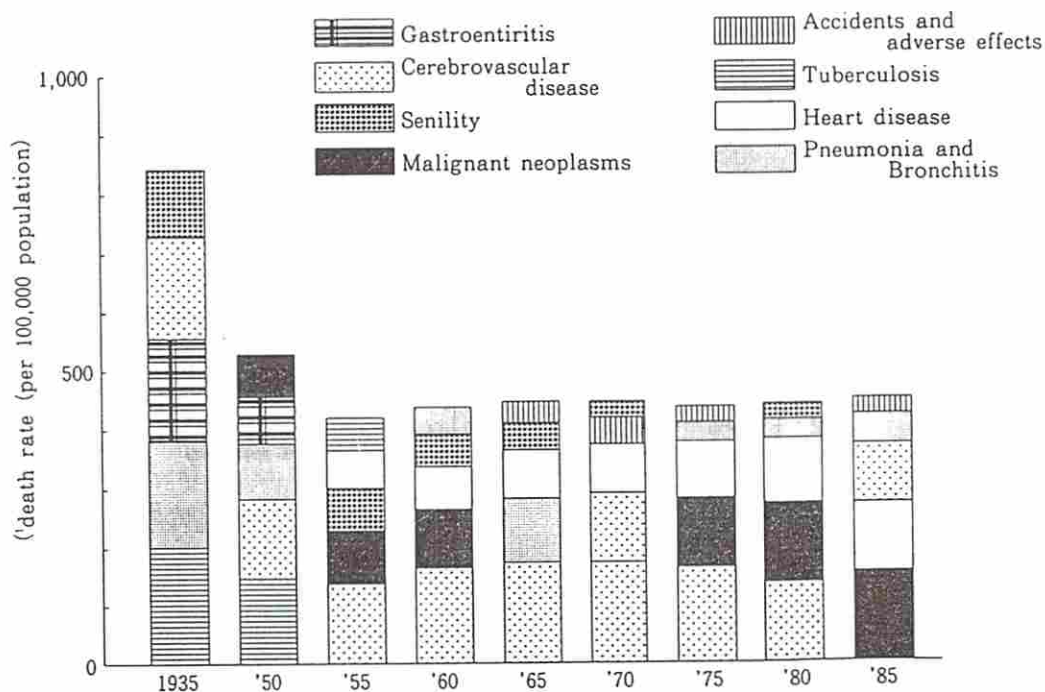


Fig. 6 Increase in the mental disease

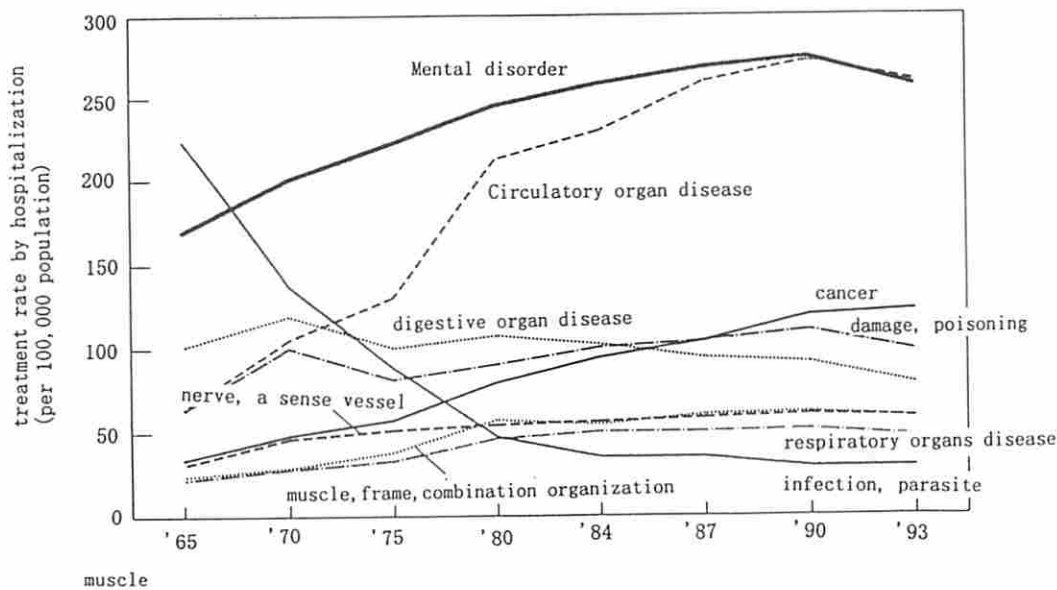


Fig. 7 The annual change of the total medical expenses and the national income

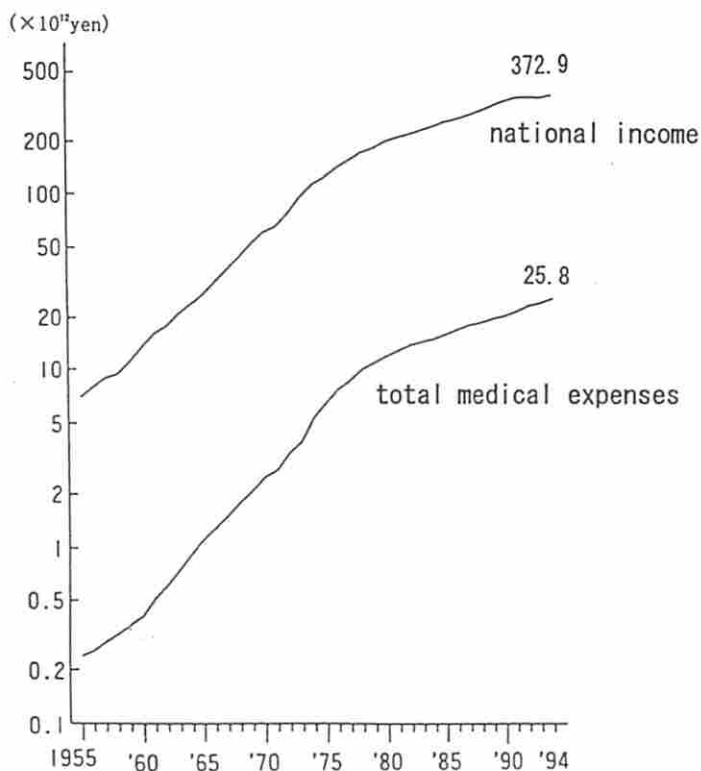


Table 5 International comparison of synthetic satisfaction of every life (%)

	Japan	U.S.A.	Thailand	Korea	Germany
satisfy	29.8	47.8	61.2	7.5	52.2
a little satisfy	57.5	41.5	24.7	54.6	35.5
a little discontent	11.0	8.0	11.4	29.1	9.6
discontent	1.5	1.5	2.8	8.9	1.8

The Management and Coordination Agency chief secretariat, Aged society countew measure room International comparative investigation about the old man's life and the consciousness (1996)

Table 6 International comparison "Whom do you want to do care?" (%)

	Japan	U.S.A.	Thailand	Korea	Germany
Spouse	60.0	40.4	41.3	45.7	45.7
children(live with)	42.6	10.6	68.2	45.2	6.6
children(don't live with)	32.0	41.4	47.0	49.1	68.4
others family	10.1	19.2	17.4	3.9	13.0
friend, acquaintance	2.0	18.1	3.7	4.9	18.5
others	2.5	11.7	2.5	0.5	8.0
nothing	3.6	1.8	2.3	3.8	4.0

The Management and Coordination Agency chief secretariat, Aged society countew measure room International comparative investigation about the old man's life and the consciousness (1996)



# 日本の少子高齢化社会の対応

富山県農村医学研究会

越山 健二, 大浦 栄次, 渡辺 正男

## 農業の果たす役割の重視

日本では、農業はずっと豊かな緑と生命産業に適った四季の景観を持つ環境の中で遂行されてきました。私は農業を生命産業と呼んでおります。そして、私たちは未だに美しい生態系や多くの生命を農業の中で保存しております。しかしながら、第二次世界大戦後、日本は最近まで経済の異常な発展に遭遇しましたが、私共の農林業は衰退の方向に歩き始めました。つまり、農村の多くの人々が都市部へ移動し、結果として耕地の減少をもたらしたのです。また、その中には荒地地になるものもあります。第一次産業のかなりの部分が、第二次産業、第三次産業に移行した結果、農林業は今や重大な転換期に直面しております。この20、30年来の急速な経済の発展は、急激な物質文明をもたらし、また人々の衣食住やレジャーなどの意識を変えてしまいました。日本人の大部分の人は自分が中流階級に属すると思っているようであります。

他方、減少する出生率と延びた寿命の故で日本は少子高齢化社会に入りました。そのことは我が国に大変重大な対応を課すことになり、医療分野にとってもまたこうした状況を見逃さないことが大きな責任となるわけです。そこで、ここ数年来、政治、行政は人・物・金の面から、保健・医療・福祉を含む多くの問題を解決するため、試みや実践を行ってきました。しかし、私は最優先すべき

ことはこうした難しい問題に取り組むことのできる人材の育成にあると考えています。

WHOの提言によるまでもなく、生命や健康の確保は身体的、精神的、または環境面の視点に原点があります。この三つの視点を分析しますと、私はこの三つが全部悪化し衰弱しつつあると思います。このような傾向は先進国といわれる国々に共通しているものがありますが、私は日本において特に顕著な現象だと思っています。簡易に述べますと、寿命は大変延びましたが、活力ある老人は比例的に少ないのです。私共が心配することは、老人医療費が年々増加していること、人々がやがてくるかもしれない痴呆、その他に不安を抱えていることなどです。また、癌や脳の病気、心臓病、糖尿病、肝臓病、エイズ等の対策が、今強く求められております。

次に私が強調したいことは、人間性の低下であります。それは、物質文明、経済発展への偏向によってでてきたものでありましょうが、そのことはまた感謝、礼儀、作法、忍耐、儉約等の思考の欠如をも私共にもたらしてしまいました。もっとも老人層と若者との差は認められますが、さらに人々の自由、平等、いろいろの権利に対する要求は自己中心的になりがちであり、連帯や協力の感覚は弱まってきました。学校や職場で異常な病気や事故がしばしば起きております。

喜怒哀楽といった精神諸機能は主に大脳に

よってコントロールされていて、これらの機能は数量化されませんし、また論理的、合理的な科学のメカニズムになじまないものがあります。私は我々社会の雰囲気や暖かさや和やかさ、恵みなどを失いつつある理由がそのあたりにあると思っています。

医療分野は環境に深く関わりがあるのに、その姿勢行動が、他の科学分野に依存し深い関心を持っていない傾向があるのは残念であります。私共は環境を自然現象と社会環境に区別しております、家庭生活や地域社会、学校、職場とどの一つも無視することはできませんが、昔から家族や地元の人々がやり遂げてきた古い役割が減ってきたか、あるいはもう無くなってしまったような感があります。マスメディアは毎日のごとく、これらの場所で突起する不健全な出来事を報道しており、不安や恐怖がつきまといます。

自然環境については、私共にはたくさんの方の解決を迫られている問題がありますが省略させていただきます。

ところで、ほんの20~30年の間で日本は先進国に成長しました。人々は寿命や行き届いた医療のことなど申しますが、反面、一人世帯が引き起こす淋しさや日常生活の基本動作に悩む人々もいるわけでありまして。その上、少子高齢化がその状況を一層悪くしているのかもしれない。先に申しました通り、人間性の低下が利己主義、連帯、協力の欠如や感謝の気持ちの欠如につながっておりまして、最終的には夢のない淋しい心の高齢者が近年急速に増加しているのです。

## 農業の果たす役割

経済発展の過程の中で、第一次産業の一つである農業はその席を他に譲りました。多くの農民が我々の視界から消えましたが、政府の保護政策によって国民は食糧、特に米は確保されております。そして日本の農協（海外

でノーキョーとして有名）は、今でも強大な力と組織を持っているのです。衣食住に関する日本の文化は伝統的に農業を基盤として参りました。

そしてその農業は長い間人々の生命や健康を築き上げてきたのです。その意味で、農業の観点から考え私は健康の問題に貢献したいのであります。人間から農を取り去ることは不可能なことであります。農業の役割は次の如きものと思います。

- (1) 食糧の確保
- (2) 土地の保全
- (3) 災害の防止
- (4) 環境保全
- (5) 伝統文化の継承
- (6) 人間性の涵養
- (7) 精神的修養の促進
- (8) 神仏への思い

科学と技術で満たされ、今や私共は繁栄の物質文明の世紀に生きておりますが、その中で経済が他のすべてに優先しております。しかしながら、名誉や地位、利潤を追求するある種の利己主義的な思考が生命や健康に影響を及ぼしつつあるのです。人類のみならず、すべての生き物にとって生存の危機が起きつつあると思います。

農業は生命産業という言い方があり、それは繰り返して大地を耕し、それぞれの土地に適した作物を育てているからであります。そしてそれは私共が身体的に、精神的に、あるいは環境的に失ったものを再生する技術を持っていると思うのです。衣食住を始めとしてすべての日本の文化は農業から由来しており、私共は農というものを自然の中で生まれ、そして健康と生命をケアする術を身につけた貴重な教養であると評価するものであります。私共は第一次産業から、私たちは少子高齢化社会への対応を学ぶべきであります。