

エコシステム

Ecosystem
Conservation
Society-Japan

5 No. 139

May
2015

地方の創生に とまどう地方 注視する世界

- 「地方創生」とは
- これまでの地域活性化策の問題点
- 自分たちのまちの戦略、「地方版総合戦略」をつくる
～地方創生のヒント～
- これからの地方創生のあり方
～自然環境を基盤にしっかり据える～
- 持続可能な地方の創生 そして持続可能な日本へ

地方創生とは新たなまちをつくり出すことです。かつてやってきた経済のさらなる発展ではなく、個性ある発展へ。その鍵は自然再生への投資です。自然と伝統が共存する美しいまちへ。

“Regional Revitalization” should mean creation of new towns not just an extension of old-style economic development. It should mean new, sustainable development with unique characteristics. The key is investment for restoration of nature. We must have beautiful communities that can coexist with nature.

Japanese Prime Minister Abe's "Regional Revitalization"

Local People Are Confused While the World Watches

In May, 2014, a special council on Japanese population (with a former cabinet minister at its chair) published a report that warned if current trend of population decline continues 896 municipalities (approximately one-half of all the Japanese municipalities) will disappear while population concentration to Tokyo will continue. It is rather desirable for the Japanese population to decline to a certain extent from the view point of recovering a balance between humans and nature, but it will be a problem if one-half of local municipalities disappear while at the same time concentration of Tokyo's population continues. Consider the impact of a large earthquake directly on Tokyo and the paralysis of the entire Japanese economy and society that would likely follow.

For this reason, in November, 2014, Abe administration enacted a law to promote regional revitalization to spread out Japanese population in a more balanced way. With the new law, the national government requires all local municipalities to come up with new development strategies by the end of fiscal 2015.

Many times in the past, the national and local governments have tried various programs to revitalize local economies. But those programs usually consisted of public construction works and incentives to lure large factories. But those public works only have lasted a short time and businesses often have moved out when they found better deals elsewhere. There was a fundamental problem about these revitalization policies.

'Regional Revitalization' or 'Creation of New Regional Communities' should mean sustainable development in every aspect of economy, finance, society and natural environment. The foundation of this development is nature itself. Natural environments contain elements of new community development such as tourism promotion; brand name creation of local agricultural, forestry and fisheries products; better child rearing environments; better health care for the elderly and prevention or reduction of disasters.

Local natural environments are different from each other depending on their geographies. Each area is unique and "only one" in the world. Each locale, even without a "World Heritage Site", certainly has its own unique natural environment that is attractive to many tourists.

We should promote local developments that are unique and sustainable without repeating same old economic development at the expense of nature. The best key to 'Creation of New Regional Communities' will be investment in natural restoration.

Faced with Prime Minister Abe's 'Regional Revitalization' policy, we are once again challenged to pursue a movement for "Creation of Beautiful Communities that can Co-exist with Nature".



If the current trend of population decline and super aging-society continues, many local municipalities may disappear in Japan.



In the past, many administrations tried to revitalize local communities only for a short time and they destroyed the local nature that is the real foundation for a sustainable community development.



We must promote new programs that create new local communities by conserving, restoring and utilizing their local natural environments.