

# Peacebuilding: The Challenges of and Prospects for a Steady-state Society

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**Abstract:** Peace is not merely the state of not being at war. It is a state without violence, prejudice, or discrimination. Peacebuilding includes all the steps toward constructing such a state of affairs. On the other hand, a steady-state society is one that is attained when humanity accepts limits on the growth of its population and its economy. It is the culture of the so-called “slow lifestyle” where almost the entire population reaches a ripe old age, the natural environment is preserved as a functioning entity, and enhanced social wellbeing as well as sustainable growth are achieved. Even though humanity has lived through the agricultural revolution, the industrial revolution, and the information revolution, we still keep going through cycles of war and conflict. Wails of grief uttered by women and children suffering in regions torn by war and afflicted by dioxin during the Viet Nam War are still heard today. Japan has now become the first country in the world to have an extreme aged population. It is becoming the first country to experience life in a steady-state society. I believe there are some perspectives and tips to be gained from Satoyama study - the study of nature as a pillar of culture – that could reveal substantive models for a Steady-state Society that is moving toward peacebuilding. Humanity now faces the challenge of creating new communities that are appropriate for the age of Eco-social welfare. To achieve this, we need to integrate the forces of science, nature and culture.

**Keywords:** Peacebuilding, Steady-state Society, Dioxin Victims, Arrival of an Extreme Aged Population, ‘Satoyama’ Study and Eco-Social Welfare, Force of ART, T H E x (x: multiply) F E C H E S

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## 1. Introduction

*Why do we need Peace-Building now?*

### **1.1. Three Core Crises: Critical Natural, Biological, and Social Conditions**

For 70 years, since World War II, we have been facing three major crises. The first core crisis is based in the natural world of physics. This is the crisis created by nuclear research, especially the use of radioactive elements. It is evidenced by the atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and the radioactive pollution caused by the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident we have been living through. The second core crisis is based in the biological sphere. This is the crisis faced by living organisms exposed to harmful materials, including dioxin (sometimes used as a biological weapon), genetically modified organisms sold as food, and “medicinal” drugs that cause adverse reactions.

The third core crisis is a social one, threats to the Family, which is the heart of human society. Diverse and rapid changes are occurring throughout the world, and the family system and its institutions cannot withstand the pressure of the many social problems engendered by these changing values. The traditional norms are disappearing, and lifestyles are changing very quickly, well within a generation. Families, and the concept of family, are collapsing. This collapse of the family is exacerbated by wars and poverty. When we look at modern society and contemplate our future, we see that human beings must overcome these three core crises and actually construct a peaceful and sustainable steady-state way of life that provides for the wellbeing of all in a world at peace.

### **1.2. The Importance of the Natural Environment (Satoyama) to Peacebuilding**

Galtung said ‘The peace is not only a state without wars and conflicts, but also a state without structural and cultural

violence, typical to prejudice and discrimination.’ (Johan Galtung, 2003) Therefore, to build peace, we must construct a society without these forms of violence. We are forced to face these issues: how can human beings overcome these three core crises, and how we can construct a society at peace? After experiencing the giant tsunami and the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and heavy flooding caused by unusual world-scale climatic conditions, we need to stop and take stock. To overcome these core crises, we must reexamine our ideas about life, our views on life and death, and our understanding of history. We need to reconstruct the links among individuals that were broken during the fast-paced economic growth that took place after World War II. Then we must review the relationships between the family and the communities where families live, review our cultural traditions, as they exist within each nation and region, and also examine the spiritual world and the sense of values it instills in us. We must reexamine culture and society as the forces that support all aspects of life, and their relationship to the forces of nature: the strength of nature and the power of the environment. This reexamination will cause us to recognize that we human beings cannot continue to survive on the globe unless we give up the towering economic growth that is depleting global resources, think earnestly about human culture and social harmony, and find a way to live within the confines of a sustainable natural world. When we look back at history in our search for the source of the strength of human culture, we see that we must reassess the value of the environment and nature (Satoyama) that were the matrix that shaped human habitations and communities. We need to re-examine these as sources of an understanding of the value of peacebuilding. That is, we must realize that all the cultures and societies we have constructed can be swept away by these great earthquakes, other natural disasters, and wars. In order to prevent these losses, inevitably we must review the power of culture – the wisdom of the human being - and integrate our culture with the natural environment. By so doing, we can find harmony between nature and our human world, and continually recreate that balance in the future.



**Figure 1.** *Bamboo Rice Curry.*

The three major foundations of Asian culture - green tea, rice, and bamboo – arise from natural Satoyama (the natural

environment on the edges of human resettlements). It is very important to resurrect and maintain the Satoyama – the birthplace of culture – in order to create a steady-state society. Tokuji Maruyama argued in his book that the Satoyama Study contributes to solve the environmental problem. And he made clear what is Satoyama's nature, for pursuing as a part of pursuing sustainable society. By clarify traditional method and measure to maintain Satoyama, he researched hints to make use them in the present society. Finally, he defined the Satoyama study is practical study in order to preserve Satoyama's nature now and future, various sciences (natural science, human science, and social science) must cooperate each other and specialists and governments must tie up and support. (Tokuji Maruyama, 2012)



**Figure 2.** *'Satoyama' Workshop with a Vietnamese Family.*

In the next chapter, I would like to address the question, what is a steady-state society?

## **2. The Arrival of a Steady-state Society**

### ***2.1. What Is a Steady-state Society, Anyway? – Answers from Our Predecessors' Study and Its Results***

The simplest description of a steady-state society is that it is a society that provides sufficient prosperity without making economic growth the ultimate goal. It is otherwise known as a zero-growth society. Yoshinori Hiroi has quoted from research reports issued by reliable research groups around the world, including “The Limits to Growth” by The Club of Rome, and said that even if the amount of resources available on earth are double current estimates, human beings will reach resource-collapse around 2040, when the population reaches 9.5 billion. (Hiroi, 2008) He believes even these estimates need to be modified, and that we must aim for a static-state point with a balance of the human population and earth's resources by at least the last half of the 21st century. On the other hand, Kishida takes a bird-eye view of human history and sees a magnificent saga. He finds that up to this point humans have made three amazing leaps of advancement that improved their chances of survival. The first leap was the spread of the use of language, which

occurred one hundred thousand years ago. The second leap was the start of civilization with agriculture and permanent settlements ten thousand years ago. The third leap was the industrial revolution in the 18th century. He says it is astonishing that the last three hundred years are comparable to the preceding ten thousand in the extent of change. He says that at this point, however, modern society has reached an impossible barrier. With our extreme environmental destruction, we have completely overwhelmed the natural regenerative and purifying capacity of the earth. If we look at areas of the natural environment being used up by the modern way of life, he suggests, Japanese consumption requires 2.4 times and U.S. consumption requires 5.3 times the environment of the entire globe to support it replaceably. (Kishida, 2014) A Japanese economist named Mizuno tells us: the philosopher Max Weber examined capitalism's cycles in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He found that the re-investment of capital (a form of self-denial in the present, or asceticism) results in huge accumulations of capital that then arouse the motivation to enjoy and spend (avarice). Capitalism's cycles are this repetition of asceticism and avarice. Since social problems, represented by the impoverished on the one hand and wealthy industrialists on the other, are complexly entangled in the capitalist ethic, incessant wars and conflicts occur. (Mizuno, 2014) Herman E. Daly, an environmental economist, identified three conditions needed to maintain a sustainable society. (Herman E. Daly 2014)

- (1) Maintain resources that are reproducible: The rate of harvesting fish must not exceed the rate at which fish can reproduce.
- (2) Maintain alternatives of un-reproducible resources: When we use crude oil, we must consider reproducible sources of energy that can be substituted for crude oil.
- (3) Absorb pollutants: the pollutants we generate must not exceed the amount that can be returned to a natural state by substances such as bacteria.

Mr. Daly concluded that a steady-state economy would be the most effective and important key to future peacebuilding.

### ***2.2. Why Do We Need a Steady-state Society in Order to Live in Peace?***

I believe there is no way to escape the three core crisis except through peacebuilding. I believe that to bring about this peacebuilding we must certainly change our philosophy and thinking, as well as develop strategies and tactics that are consistent with these new ideas. Now, if we are going to protect the global environment, and be able to present a sustainable way of life to the next generation, we need to review these natural forces and the cultural force they gave birth to. Therefore, here in this paper I want to appeal to the importance of Satoyama. It is difficult to form a sustainable society based on the conventional ideas of economic development and economic principles, represented by the current conception of capitalism. Even with the new ideas and methodologies that support modern life, and with the

ideas and methodologies proposed to support a steady-state society, we have not found solutions to the group of social problems we face. These include the exhaustion of fossils fuels, the advancement of global warming, biological changes caused by pollutants, food scarcity spreading across the world, repeated financial bubbles, increased poverty and income disparity, population increases, and the core problem of an extreme aging population. Now, we must thoroughly examine these subjects: what are our goals (Dreams), what can we do (What leeway is there?), and how must we act (Be brave)?

## **3. The Importance of Educating People About the Steady-state Society – Learning from the Dioxin Problem**

### ***3.1. The Significance of the Dioxin Problem***

The program to educate humankind about the steady-state society I am discussing here is not a narrow one, typical of conventional education programs concerning the environment, human welfare or peace. We need an approach to peace advocacy that includes many specialists and practitioners with broad perspectives. The type of education we need must be configured as a comprehensive and integrated research platform linked to a new global approach to environmental conservation that focuses on securing human safety as well as preserving the environment. There must be a close examination of the ideological underpinnings of this school of thought, and the philosophical background that supports this viewpoint must be applied and tested repeatedly, as well as demonstrated, not merely discussed.

The Satoyama studies I am now engaged in are an example of the approach I advocated above. When I was first developing a program to study human welfare and learn how to educate people about that issue, I became aware of the Viet Nam refugee problem, and the fateful encounter of the twin boys, Viet and Doc, who were victims of defoliant dispersal during the Viet Nam War. This woke me up to the fact of the global environmental problem. I concluded that learning about Satoyama is a very effective way to be educated about the steady-state society. Among the three core crises mentioned earlier, the first core crisis – destruction involving radioactivity (exemplified by Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Fukushima nuclear power generation plant) - was a serious wake-up call to humanity. Now, we would like to illustrate the importance of forming the steady-stage society using the dioxin problem, a warning to humanity about the second core crisis, biological weapons and medical drug-induced suffering. After the *Silent Spring* was written by Rachel Carson, the book triggered the establishment of Earth Day and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. It played a role in providing opportunities to accuse humanity itself of environmental pollution, and made the issue of the relationship between humanity and the environment a central focus. (Rachel Carson, 1974) The

problem of dioxin became highlighted when the U.S. Army dispersed defoliant containing large amounts of dioxin on the Viet Nam jungles, in order to prevent the activities of liberation front soldiers. This dioxin is a known human carcinogen. Many locations where dioxin was dispersed in Viet Nam are places where there are unusual numbers of children born with physical defects. Dioxin is implicated, but the relationship between these symptom and dioxin has not yet been completely proven. Among the victims, Viet and Doc lived and serve as examples of the bitter struggle these afflicted people must endure. (R. Katsura, 2013) The fact that even unborn infants can be so badly damaged by the presence of a chemical weapon like dioxin in their environment is one of the most important keys to educating people about peace. This danger must not be separated from peacebuilding by linking it only to issues of the environment and general human welfare. That is one reason that, in this paper, I would like to emphasize the importance of Satoyama studies as a discipline that links peace studies, human welfare and the steady-state society, as a new discipline aiming at conservation and environmental regeneration.

### ***3.2. Eco-social Welfare as a Perspective from Which to Create a New Steady-state Society***

I have been seeking “a new capitalism”, one that incorporates the goals of a sustainable environment and a social system that provides wide-spread human welfare. This new capitalism will not be Keynesianism, traditional social democracy, or the neo-liberalism or neoclassicism of traditional conservatism. In fact, the outline of what we are aiming for has already been presented in *The Integration of the Environment and Welfare*, written by Hiroi, et al. Hiroi, et al., say that a new system that is an integration of those three economic systems (conservatism, liberalism, and social democracy), plus Green social policy (Eco-social Welfare) will result in an important social philosophy for the future. (Hiroi, 2008) Eco-social Welfare is human welfare considered in a world acknowledged to have limited resources. In developing such a policy, one runs up against the difficult problem that showed the limitations of social democracy. It proved difficult or impossible to maintain a balance between economic growth and an equitable distribution of welfare, which had been the goal of the welfare state after World War II. (Hiroi, 2008) Now, I would like to describe the relationship, as I see it, between the social systems of Asia and a future Asia based on Eco-social Welfare principles.

## **4. Problems and Prospects for the Social Welfare of Asia as Related to the Eco-Social Welfare Movement**

### ***4.1. Characteristics of Social Welfare in Asia***

Asia is made up of countries with complicated and diverse social and cultural histories. Up to now, Asia's problems have

not been solvable by the application of Western style welfare systems. The current features of the social and cultural structures of Asian countries are diversity, rapid social change, and great disparities. (Katsura & Saigo, 2014) There is no region in the world that has countries with more diverse, layered social structures. This is a big difference between Western countries and Asian countries. Even in a same region, the disparities among the people living there (the poverty-wealth gap, differences among races, geographical difference between north and south, and east and west, differences related to gender, differences between city and farm dwellers) are far larger than those in Western countries.

The most widespread feature of social change in the population distribution in Asia today is the rapid growth of the percentage of old people. Though Western countries constructed the social welfare programs that caused this type of distribution 45 to 110 years ago, the Japanese reached this skewed distribution in a mere 25 years. Surprisingly, other Asian countries have reached an extreme aging population even faster than Japan. Another disparity in Asia is the great difference between places with rapid economic growth and those with slow economic growth. Oizumi, et al., discuss aging in Asia by roughly classifying countries into three groups based on their economic growth rates. (Oizumi, 2007)

The first group consists of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, which all have universal social security systems. The second group consists of Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and China, where various insurance systems are yet to be established, although there are insurance systems for employees. The third group consists of Viet Nam, India, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. In these underdeveloped countries, the social insurance system is limited to some public servants and professional soldiers.

Speaking bluntly, within 20 years these Asian countries will experience the same change in population distribution that Western countries and Japan have already experienced. If they are to lessen or eliminate the differences between these three groups of countries, they must also develop sustainable welfare systems based on attaining a steady state that will allow world economic growth to stop. It is not too much to say that these Asian countries (and other underdeveloped countries in Africa and elsewhere) are in the difficult position that they must prepare for the steady-state economic society of the future. I believe that the movement toward an international social welfare policy, aimed at peacebuilding and the improvement of human welfare, is the most important policy to pursue in order to achieve peace and develop the social welfare of Asian countries and other places, like the Middle East. The Japan-Viet Nam Friendship Sustainability University plan\* will become a reality in Autumn 2016. It will be an important model for international collaboration and international cooperation. All the nations of the world will be united in developing a plan for

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\* See [www.vju.ac.vn](http://www.vju.ac.vn) or [www.vju.vnu.edu.vn](http://www.vju.vnu.edu.vn) for the Japan-Viet Nam Sustainability University project

sustainability, and the future of Asia will take shape in this way.

#### 4.2. Asian Ethos and a Creative Sustainable Welfare Society

Although Asian nations have been largely under the influence of Western policies during the 70 years since the end of World War II, Singapore moved toward the coming steady-state policy most rapidly. They succeeded in establishing a full housing policy quickly, and parallel local welfare foundations with an attentive family welfare policy (the CPF: Central Provident Fund).<sup>\*\*</sup> One fundamental difference between Asian and Western countries is that in Asia the family and the local community stand as a barrier between the individual and the larger government. They help people have a feeling of contentment, and shape people's views of life and death. For example, the Chinese have a concept of respect 「孝」 (Kou-filial duty). Koreans have respect 「仁」 (Jin-perfect virtue), Japanese have respect 「忠」 (Cyuu-loyalty), and the Vietnamese have respect 「義」 (Gi-honour). Each ethnic group has a different lifestyle. For example, Chinese families respect the relationship between parents and children, especially father and son. On the other hand, Vietnamese families respect the relationship of the couple more than that between parents and their children. Serious problems related to gender still remain common to all the countries in Asia. The so-called "Man First" custom of patriarchal societies is alive in these nations.

I believe that in the developing international civil society (under globalization) each Asian country must review its traditional, social, and cultural sense of values and customs against three criteria.

- (1) Cultural and social customs that harmonize with nature, and a way of seeing the inheritance and preservation of the landscape as valuable, should be retained as good traditions.
- (2) Customs that are against the ideals and philosophy of universal human rights should be revised or discarded as bad traditions.
- (3) The creation and development of new customs and various systems should be seen as a better tradition.

Point (1) includes the preservation of traditional landscapes, and the creation of better ties between families and local residents. Nature, religion, and culture are united, as is typical under the old (lunar) calendar. Point (2) includes the end of old gender limitations, of course. Especially, this includes correction of the idea that the differences between men and women justify sexual discrimination and prejudice. Point (3) requires true international cooperation based on trust and collaboration among countries as related to the creation of a creative and sustainable human welfare society.

<sup>\*\*</sup> The CPF policy is a remarkable social security system that can be used, not for only health care, unemployment compensation, and pensions, but also for securing a residence. It is a compulsory insurance system where both entrepreneurs and employers provide a certain proportion of the cost during people's working lives.

#### 4.3. From Local to Global – the Formation of a Trial Model of the International Satoyama School House: Ryoan

I reside in the Takayama region, near Ikoma City, Nara. This area produces 80 to 90% of the Chasen, an important tool used in the tea ceremony, one of Japan's traditional cultural activities. The community is surrounded by the oldest group of Satoyamas. As the flow of modernization sweeps past, the site is inhabited by endangered species, such as goshawks and salamanders, though it is near huge urban centers. The area has been protected from development because it is in the mountains and on the border between the prefectures. The site has fortunately been left as the location of the oldest group of Satoyamas. The residents who discovered the goshawks living there realized the historical and cultural value of the site. They blocked the march of urbanization and stopped developments that threatened to bring about the collapse of the natural ecology. Then they launched a master plan to create Satoyama Park in Takayama, Ikoma, all by themselves. While preventing oppression by local government and private enterprise, they are preserving the area's natural history and culture, and striving to create an altogether new style of town.

I opened the International Satoyama School: 'Ryoan' in a corner of an old private house that was built 120 years ago. In that space, we are trying to find and practice exchanges and collaborations between local residents and international students. We hold periodic events for local children and their parents with the support of the local population. There are monthly projects to reclaim idle lands, and study meetings for learning the bamboo, tea, and rice cultures, fieldwork 4 times a year to study the local natural history and ecological system, harvest festivals (collecting bamboo shoots in the spring, and making rice cakes in the autumn) twice a year. We are sure the foreign students participating in these events will promote sustainable programs related to the environment, peace and welfare in their home countries. The cultural use of rice, tea, and bamboo was born in Asia, especially in East and Southeast Asia. The use of these plants was passed down to their descendants by the people who lived near their natural growth areas, called Satoyamas, which surrounded their little communities. I'm currently researching the exploitation of natural energy, reviewing the lunar calendar, examining views of life and death, and ideas about health care (including natural childbirth, the nature of nursing, and a review of natural burials) and looking at local diets and lifestyles. (R. Katsura, 2014)

## 5. Conclusion

The new trial perspectives for Eco-Social Welfare: The forth of ART and T H E x (x: multiply) F E C H E S (multiple overall perspectives for policy making)

I have been talking about the steady-state society and peacebuilding. What occupies my mind is how to integrate the study of human welfare and of peace. I tried to find solutions in Western research. That led to trying to develop a



theory from the comparison of The Welfare State by Gøsta Esping-Andersen and his thesis of welfare based on monotheism. (E. Andersen, 1999) In countries with different cultural and social backgrounds, like the diverse, multi-layered, and multiplex situation in Asia, you find peoples with quite different lifestyles, even though they all grew up with the cultures of bamboo, tea, and rice. In these regions, when we try to link the provision of human welfare, the environment and culture, we find that the strength of the culture in a given region will be the most important aspect to contend with. When we think about social welfare development in Asia, I am convinced that this is also true. To conclude this paper, in a discussion of the Eco-Social Welfare that Hiroe, et al. directs us to examine, I would like to list the following group of keywords I derived from my review of Satoyama study and a series of practices we pursue at the International Satoyama School.

If we replace the current world society with a steady-state society, we will need a globe. This is called the E A R T H in English. The first letter E is for Ecology and Environment. The last letter H is for Humanity, Heart, Health, and Happiness. The link we find between E (peace studies) and H (welfare studies), ART (arts, skills, learning by experience, and culture). This ART is not merely fine arts and decoration. It is the wisdom of human beings, experienced knowledge, and a spiritual strength in culture. Now, in the age where we are moving to a steady-state society, we need to search for this ART (the power of art).



**Figure 3.** MULTIPLE – OVERALL TRIAL PERSPECTIVES for STEADY-STATE SOCIETY – T H E F E C H E S.

Finally, I would like to add that develop Eco-social welfare, we need T H E x F E C H E S, too. In order to integrate T: Tourism, H: Health and welfare, and E: Ecology, we must develop plans and policies suitable to the local situation, linking F: Food, E: Energy solutions, C: Caring, H: Housing, E: Education and S: Sports as a field of study. In other words, though these academic areas and fields of study have been discussed and developed independently, for developing the steady-state society we must integrate and comprehend T H E x F E C H E S in a globalized society. That is, to establish Eco-social Welfare: while the public

sector (central and local governments), the private sector (businesses and non-profit organizations (NPOs), and the individual component (families and localities) cooperate and collaborate with each other, environmental studies, welfare studies, and tourism (as an aspect of the joy of living) are linked; the integration of all of these is an important subject to study and an important thing to teach, if we are to realize a steady-state society.

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- [14] Notice: This paper was revised one which included in my special retirement memorial collection ‘Ritsumeikan International Study’ (Vol. 28. No. 4 2016). It was also reported at ICSD (Internaional Consortium of Social Development) held in Croatia (Zagreb) in July 2017.