

302 Returning to Harmony with Nature

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Introduction

Good morning everybody .

Some of you may be wondering what would a man in charge of police in Sudan be doing in STS Forum in Kyoto . Well; for one thing , I am by virtue of my constitutional duties , responsible for the protection of Wild Life in my country . Furthermore I am chairing the national defense council which is responsible for managing natural calamities including floods that in this year alone has left 100,000 families homeless.

We increasingly feeling the pinch of global warming not only in our local communities and natural resources but more so in our social order. The crisis in the war torn region of Darfur is predominantly if not exclusively due to environmental degradation and demographic competition over even diminishing natural resources (pastures vs. agrarian land), that has been illustrated unequivocally in the United Nations Environment program (UNEP report July2007).

Text

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we convene here today to deliberate on, amongst other things, issues of harmonizing with nature, about thousands of the followers of the renowned mystic Jala-ud- Din Al Romi are by sheer coincidence, in the midst of their commemoration of his 800th birthday. He is revered in Turkey and elsewhere in the Middle East as one of those esoteric founders of 'Cosmic Harmony'. The celebrating devotees gather to perform or watch the famous mesmerizing musical dance of the whirling Dervish, symbolizing planets spinning around their orbits.

The Quest for harmonizing with nature is perhaps universal. Here in Japan the spiritual philosophy of Aikido has long since maintained that the physical movement in the popular martial Art, symbolize universal laws and processes of nature.

In this Aikido context, it is believed that negative forces may not be countered with aggression, but are better controlled and redirected through the power and balance of nature.

The human quest for harmony with nature has presumably withstood the test of time. In fact it may have, against all odds, survived the great scientific and technological revolution of the day.

It appears that underlying this seemingly universal and ceaseless quest for harmony with nature, there is perhaps a persistent and legitimate craving for concordance, peace and dignity within and amongst us, and for equilibrium with our physical environment.

The great scientific and technological revolution has undoubtedly contributed to this gigantic millennium of growth the world is now enjoying.

Science and technology have also contributed their own bit in advancing the quest for harmony with nature, partly in an attempted to solve the very problems they themselves have helped create. Detailed analyses were scientifically obtained pertaining to environmental degradation: global warming, deforestation, overuse and abuse of energy, acid rain, loss of species, to mention but a few.

Furthermore, political and legislative measures were suggested or taken worldwide to reduce gas emission, industrial pollution as well as racial prejudice emanating from failure to develop an equitable culture of ecological sharing.

However the results as yet do not seem to be quite satisfactory. Some people still hold that our ancient homo-sapiens have presumably fared better in tuning their needs to their social and physical surroundings. It is often argued, for example, that without sophisticated medical and dietary knowledge our ancestors have enjoyed healthier and more balanced food perfectly diversified by solar seasons, lunar patterns and geographical location.

Thus although we have developed intelligent world system to boost the function of technology empowered economies we are nonetheless aspiring for more wisdom to enable us to optimally utilize these economies by persevering the well being of the natural and social milieus.

What we need is perhaps a spirit to drive this gigantic millennium of growth. The question is where we can find this spirit if at all one does exist?

Ladies and gentlemen, I think I owe a good part of my conclusion to the nourishing ideas to which we have been treated in the various sessions of this meeting. Here is my conclusion; 'Climate Science' is about observation of the earth systems assessing impacts making precise predictions and raising the alarm. 'Energy Technology' is about developing mitigating options. It is finally the public (individuals and institutions) who eventually make the choices out of these options.

'Climate Consciousness ' And' Energy Behavior ' should constitute new and frontier areas of scientific enquiry which may perhaps need more attention.

This enquiry is obviously a meeting ground for not only science and technology but also theology , philosophy , art , education , media , sociology , geography , political science....etc .

Social science and humanities may yet have to come on board and assist in arriving at a more profound analysis of the multifaceted variables of disharmony with nature as they reflect in our behavior, consciousness, perceptions and expectations. Can STS arrange for such a wider congregation? This has yet to be answered.

It is worth noting here that Kyoto University has been nominated as world center of excellence in human and environmental studies for some five years now. (Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University)

Ladies and gentlemen I cannot omit at the end of my speech to pay my tribute to chairman Mr. Koji Omi for being such an inspiring STS Forum Leader, and to your wonderful gathering for being so thought stimulating. Thank you and good day.