

A Beautiful Earth for our Children

The state of the environment is far more serious than we are led to believe.

This brief outline covers the present status of such local concerns as dioxin poisoning and endocrine disrupting chemicals.

In developed countries; "If safety has not been proved, then a thing is considered to be dangerous.

In Japan and developing countries; "If danger has not proved, then a thing is considered to be safe.

In developed countries, citizens take it for granted that government regulations and preventive measures are set in place to ensure as description above. In Japan, however, there are countless non-regulated facets of society in which the opposite phrase is applicable.

Here are some examples:

1. Garbage Issue

- As neither do Japanese companies have any liability for their products (meaning they do not have to collect and treat their products when they become waste, nor Japanese citizens do not have to pay for a garbage toll, Japan is full of excessive garbage, having extreme numbers of incinerators in the world (Germany 50, USA 170, Japan 1900!!)
Because a fundamental reduction of garbage hasn't been controlled, incinerators will be saturated within a few years.
- In the developed countries, garbage was dramatically reduced not only by the products liability of companies concerned, but also by a garbage toll paid by citizens.
- Principle of the garbage reduction: 4R (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)
- European countries enact, so called a recycle economy law, taking responsibility for the treatment of garbage, implementing a deposit system; producers' liability of companies (collecting garbage and setting a depositing system); imposing a higher tax on disposal containers; a complete distinction of garbage; making compost.
- Paying attention to 4R
 - Buying or using things with lesser garbage
 - Pressuring public administrations in Japan to take effective policy measures for garbage as European countries do.

2. Dioxin Poisoning

- "Chloride vinyl" (containing organic chlorine used in the production of food trays and wrapping plastic) emits poisonous dioxin gases when burned. This gas is 1000 times more poisonous than potassium cyanide.
- In developed countries, a strict air pollution regulation exists for the disposal of plastics (less than 0.1 nano-gram).

- In Japan, a regulation for dioxin is extremely weak (less than 80 nano-grams), meaning 800 times weaker than that of the above-mentioned law. As a result, a smoke and residual ashes from industrial incinerators continues to pollute this country with dioxin waste.
- In developed countries, a strict dioxin pollution regulation exists for air, water, soil, and food. The Japanese Health Ministry reacts extremely late and indulgent to this problem, saying that "It is not necessary to have such a strict regulation for now."
- A robust action based on 4R is indispensable against plastics and dioxin contamination. It is also essential to express our intention for a realization of the strict regulation with dioxin waste.

3. Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs)

- It is now notified that hormonal activities responsible for both physical and mental functions can be severely "disrupted" by the interference of some chemical substances. EDCs negatively affect a fetus, causing severe disability.

Effect; Abnormal reproductive organs, sperm depletion, sterility child depletion.

Mental instability, leading to violent behaviours

Cause; Dioxin, PCB, DDT, fertilizers, insecticides, and pesticides.

Plastic products; a coating material inside of canned food and drinks, baby's milk bottles, plastic toys made from vinyl chloride

Tooth fillings, preservatives, germicides, anti-oxidizing(anti-rust) agents, synthetic cleansers, tooth paste.

Styrene is also detected from instant cup noodle containers.

- It is required to practice 4R against products of plastics and chemical, and to have strict regulations. It is also necessary to express our opinions as much as possible for the enactment of the regulation. In some areas, citizens (green consumers) were able to change the school table wares from plastics to wooden and porcelain by expressing their opinions against EDCs.

•What is crucial is that each and every one of us makes an effort to understand the current environmental situation, and in so doing, inform others.
 •Let's become a "Green Consumer", being environmentally-friendly !