

EPOCAL CHANGES

IDEAS FROM THE EAST FOR A NEW SOCIETY

BEYOND COVID-19

The pandemic, in which the whole of humanity is involved and to which we were not prepared despite the fact that its possibility had been announced for some time, required and will require urgent and extraordinary social and economic measures. These remedies have had and will have a dramatic impact on individuals and communities. It is said that in the end the world will no longer be the same having become aware of the inseparable bond that holds all living beings together.

However, there are problems looming over all the countries that are even more serious than the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which have also been announced for a long time and in particular connected with climate change: overheating of the planet, rising sea levels, desertification of some regions, lack of water and consequent famines, migratory flows of millions of people... there are also the typical problems of the most technologically advanced countries: pollution, increase in ageing population, fall in the birth rate, growing socio-economic inequality... All these problems demand urgent and drastic measures rather than recriminations or proclamations!

A NEW SOCIETY

The changes we partly hope for and partly fear will affect everyone, individuals and communities. Companies will also have to change their business model. The reference values must be based on the principle that the common good comes before the private one and that the company's existence is justified not so much for the profit they generate for shareholders but for the contribution they offer to satisfy the essential needs of people expressed in terms of survival, well-being, identity and freedom. Furthermore, the development that humanity pursues must be sustainable: we cannot pretend to dominate and adapt the environment to our needs (the present pandemic proves it widely): we will only be able to survive if we are committed to adapting ourselves to the environment to satisfy our needs, respecting the ecosystem. Finally, the relationship between human beings cannot be based on competition and struggle, but must be based on collaboration, participation and harmony, values that lead to peace. Oriental traditions and, recently, Japan's search for a new type of society that aspires to make the most of the new technologies that have proved so useful even in this period of pandemic infection have often been oriented in this direction.

SOCIETY 5.0

In line with the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development ((SDGs) approved by the United Nations on September 25, 2015, starting in 2016, Japan - industry, government and academia - began to theorize a new type of society. This should lead to overcoming the difficulties and problems that currently plague Japan, not only, but all humanity.

The Society characterized by the collection of wild fruits and hunting (Society 1.0), by agriculture (Society 2.0), by industry (Society 3.0), by information (Society 4.0), should be followed by the so-called Society 5.0. This, based on the representative technologies of the 4th industrial revolution (Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Big Data, Digital Factories, Robotics ...), will be a human-centred society.

This new type of super smart society, in which the prosperity and well-being of all men will have to find a place, would be characterized by activities aimed at creating value, respect for diversity, sustainability and harmony with the environment. In this society, each person will be able to freely express their creativity and imagination, have equal access to the planet's resources and be connected to everyone else, to things and to various systems. Through the integration of the physical and virtual space (cyberspace), obtained thanks to new technologies, everything in society - work, home and family life, fun, rest - will be intertwined and connected, without watertight

compartments. The quality of life should improve for everyone: those who work - not so much as a "work force" but as a "work mind" - will no longer be engaged in alienating activities but will contribute with their work to a greater balance between economy, ecology and social stability.

Although there are quite a few issues - which must be resolved - relating to respect for privacy, responsibility, security and transparency, something has started to be achieved especially in the field of health, mobility and public services in general. However, everyone's involvement and participation will be needed and, especially, a change in people's minds: we will have to start considering others not as competitors to beat, but as travel companions to walk with together.

For Society 5.0, for those interested, there is a lot of documentation available
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