

# We Need to Act Now to Save Earth

The Earth that we make our home is facing a grave problem – global warming. It seems pretty certain this problem is largely man-made, driven by our desire to make our lives ever more comfortable.

Because of global warming, thick ice in the Arctic is melting, and the polar bear is beginning to lose its place to live in, while in the South Pacific Ocean, there have been incidents of rising sea levels swamping the land of some countries. And life forms normally found in tropical and subtropical regions are being discovered in areas that are a great distance away.

Yet despite these signs, we have been unable to find effective, specific measures to tackle the problem. We recently hear about studies being made into the technology of storing carbon dioxide underground, but to me, this appears to be only a makeshift measure. I think fundamental solutions would lie in other areas such as discovering ways of utilizing carbon dioxide or inventing a form of power that would emit less carbon dioxide.

Of the approximately 1.5 million confirmed species of animals and plants on

Earth, human beings, who are just one of the species, are threatening the lives of the rest. It is time to realize this fact and to pursue technological development as speedily as we possibly can.

I wonder if you have heard of “oxygen bars” that have increasingly cropped up in Tokyo recently. I haven’t been to one myself, but a friend of mine, who has, told me that they are like gas stations providing fuel for cars that have run out of gas. The only difference, of course, is that instead of cars, it is tired-out people who come to breathe oxygen for a pick-me-up. When I heard this, the disturbing thought occurred to me that oxygen could become a commercial product, and follow the path of oil. The rise in the number of “oxygen bars” may not have a direct connection to global warming, but if we do not take urgent anti-global warming policies, there might come a time when households will have to be equipped with oxygen supply pipes, and oxygen will be sold in stores and traded at high prices.

To ensure that such a future does not become a reality, we need to draw on all the



Photo: AFLO

wisdom there is around the world. We need to move fast and effectively to save Earth’s natural environment and the other 1.5 million species that live in it.

I am afraid that the time left for us to use our heads is running very short.

N.Ozawa

## Readers' Column

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