

Keynote Speech

Masakazu Taniguchi Marketing Consultant/
CEO of Japan Life Design Systems, Inc.



The era of sustainability and survival

This transformative era poses the fundamental question, “What should we value the most in our lives?” Sustainability has become a new global common language. We should not aim for a standardized norm by comparing ourselves with others, but each one of us should be able to live a fulfilling life where we can be true to ourselves. It is you who must survive this era of transformation. No one else but each one of us is the protagonist in our own life.

We tend to celebrate what is “extraordinary,” but something extraordinary happens only in between the ordinary days. Rather than distinguishing extraordinary and ordinary as separate matters, we should focus on finding happiness in our daily lives. Every individual is at the center of everyday lives and society. Pursuing personal interests, fulfilling our roles, and valuing each other are the key components of living an ordinary yet full life. Japan has one of the longest life expectancies in the world, but we should not be just good at living a long life. We should lead the world by setting an example of how to lead a full life in harmony with our local community.

Panel Discussion

Life Innovation Nagano

<Panelists>



Masakazu Taniguchi
Marketing Consultant/
CEO of Japan Life Design Systems, Inc.



Megumi Ushikubo
Trend Critic/CEO of Infinity, Ltd./Guest Professor at Graduate
School of Business Administration, Rikkyo University



Hirokazu Aoki
Thrift shop TRIANGLE



Tadafumi Azuno
CEO of ReBuilding Center JAPAN, Inc.



Mayu Yamamura
Agriculture Adviser at Nagano Prefecture
Life with Agriculture Support Center

<Moderator>



Yukari Motani
Rural Relocation Consultant/
President of Tomo Sogyo Juku

As we face major transformations in our society, how can we live sustainably while being true to ourselves? The three panelists are inspired by the rich nature of Nagano where they find harmony with their lives and work creatively each day to build a sustainable society. With their lifestyles as our guide, this panel discussion explored the theme of new lifestyles that are emerging in society.

Panel Discussion

Aoki Unlike conventional thrift shops, TRIANGLE only sells clothing that is donated. About 2,000 clothing items have been donated so far, clearly showing that society is full of unused things. It may sound like an exaggeration, but we believe that the more we collect used clothing, the more we make the world a better place. We are striving to build a regenerative society where each of us can pass on our used clothing to someone else without throwing them away. We hope to connect daily actions to create a large movement so that we can help improve society.

Yamamura I was born in Tokyo, but I have always loved plants and ever since I was little I was determined to live in Nagano where my mother was born. I moved to Shiojiri in 2007 and am very happy living life with my garden which I have always dreamed of having. My life is filled with creativity—when I realize I need an ingredient while cooking, I can go fetch some from my garden. When I harvest many tomatoes, I make tomato sauce to enjoy throughout the year. Growing vegetables or making food is much more fun than buying them. I hope to share the excitement of living sustainably with more people, especially children.

Azuno I established ReBuilding Center JAPAN in 2016. We buy old building materials and furniture from vacant houses to utilize them to renovate buildings and make furniture. Japan has a high percentage of vacant houses, which generate 1,385,000 tons of industrial waste annually when demolished. On the other hand, people import old building materials from overseas, causing CO2 emissions. I started ReBuilding Center Japan with the aim of resolving this contradiction. Utilizing old building materials not only makes the previous owners happy but also conserves forests and creates new jobs. We hope our business can make everyone happy.

Ushikubo When I wrote “Herbivore Boys” in 2008, young people were already starting to reject the direction that the Japanese economy was taking after the period of rapid economic growth and the bubble economy. While refusing to live competitively, they were thinking about how to dispose of products even when purchasing them, as well as enjoying making things for themselves. With more people like the three panelists in society, the younger generation will be able to live the life they desire and the older generation will notice the shift in society and be encouraged to change.

Motani In Nagano, where nature deeply affects us in each season, we enjoy being creative with our food, clothing, and shelter. I hope our sustainable lifestyles will inspire you in some ways.



Shuichi Abe

Governor of Nagano Prefecture



Masakazu Taniguchi

Marketing Consultant/
CEO of Japan Life Design Systems, Inc.

Taniguchi It is exciting that Nagano has many good examples of new lifestyles.

Abe I felt that there were common themes between your keynote speech and the panel discussion. The first is ‘something extraordinary in ordinary days,’ to discover new values in our daily lives. The second is ‘self-sufficient life,’ to increase the aspects in our lives that supply our own needs. These two themes will be very important in fostering new lifestyles.

Taniguchi If we wish to continue receiving nature’s bounty in a sustainable manner, a lifestyle like Ms. Yamamura’s ‘life with agriculture’ involving creatively living in harmony with nature will likely draw more attention. I hope this trend will be promoted further.

Abe Convenience is not always better than inconvenience. We can enjoy being creative in an inconvenient situation. For my woodstove at home, I need to carry logs from outside on cold days and it can be difficult to start a fire at first. Having a woodstove might seem inconvenient but it gives me pleasant surprises in a way that electrical devices cannot. I feel that our conventional values are starting to change. We hope to build a community from Nagano where people can live a full life not only materialistically but also spiritually.

Taniguchi The pandemic has changed everything and we are forced to think creatively. By losing the everyday life that we took for granted, many of us have realized the importance of sustaining our life force. In modern society, we have forgotten our relationship with nature, even though we cannot live without it. I think society will come to enjoy living in harmony with nature once again, and we will return to our essence.

Abe The Covid-19 pandemic and climate change might appear insuperable problems for any individual to tackle. However, neither of them can be solved without each of us changing our actions. Global challenges are actually affected largely by the lifestyles of individuals. The question today is, how can we transform our lifestyle?