Ama Town's Concept of Sufficiency and Message to the World

Nai-mono-wa-nai

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About Ama Town

About 60 kilometers from Japan’s main island
1 WHAT IS THIS CONCEPT OF NAI-MONO-WA-NAI?
The Two Meanings of Nai-mono-wa-nai

• In 2011 Ama town adopted the slogan of Nai-mono-wa-nai (ないものはない).
• “Nai” means “nothing” or “not” and “mono” is “thing.”
• The first meaning is a simple statement: “What is not here ... is not here”
  – “We don’t have it here, so just accept the situation.”
• A second meaning is “There is nothing that is not here.”
  – “Everything ... is ... here.”
The basic conditions are very different from urban area of Japan
NAI-MONO-WA-NAI AND AMA TOWN
Youth group activities

“If there is nothing fun to do here, let’s create it.”

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Vending machines in Tokyo

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No vending machines at the ferry terminal
High School Miryokuka Project

- the Dōzen High School is trying to make a greater use of the local challenges
  - population decline; a dramatically declining birth rate and aging population; financial pressures
- The negative dimensions of local challenges could be seen as resources.
- These challenges could help to develop the human resources that can pioneer a new future for Japan.
The number of the Dōzen High School students: V-shaped recovery

![Graph showing the number of students from 1989 to 2016, with a decline and subsequent recovery.](Image)

Source: The Handbook of 2017 Census in Ama Town
Population Decline After Postwar Period

Source: THE 2015 POPULATION CENSUS
The Number of People Moving to Ama Town is on the Rise

Source: The Handbook of 2017 Census in Ama Town
The secret attraction for these people is the spirit of Nai-mono-wa-wa-nai.
There are also many examples of nai-mono-wa-nai in day-to-day life

• There are no babysitting services, but neighbors will take care of local kids any time.
• There are no “disco” clubs, but all of the townspeople can dance the traditional dance along with the “Kinyamonya” local folk songs.
• There are no security companies, but people do look after each other, so no one worries about that.
• There are no flower shops, but lovely flowers are growing outside many homes.
• There are no movie theaters, but there are many local video nights.
3 THREE MESSAGES OR BENEFITS OF NAI-MONO-WA-NAI
Three messages or benefits of nai-mono-wa-wa-nai

1. Positive acceptance
2. We have everything that is important: Know sufficiency (values + self-reliance + social capital)
3. Enjoy the “process” of creating things together (willingness to take on a challenge + special skills + social capital)
A society of mass consumption is a society that has forgotten the joy of creating something deliberately together.
4 HAPPINESS AND NAI-MONO-WA-NAI IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
The ecological footprint of humanity today is the equivalent of 1.7 planet Earths.

https://www.footprintnetwork.org/our-work/ecological-footprint/
GDP per capita does not correlate explicitly with the degree of satisfaction

The degree of life satisfaction does not increase

Do you think continued GDP growth is necessary for Japanese Society?

Source: Institute for Studies in Happiness, Economy and Society
Developed countries need to free themselves from the models of mass production, mass consumption, and forever chasing after economic growth.

The nai-mono-wa-nai concept of Ama Town is a new model that can help us accomplish that.
5 SUMMARY
Rather than having us seek endless growth,

nai-mono-wa-nai

proposes for the world the possibility of

creating happiness for everyone

but still keeping within the finite boundaries of

our planet Earth.
Thank you very much for your attention.

THE END