

Great Politicians

Prime Ministers and All the Mayors of Local Government Should Designate Natural Areas as Gift for Future Generations When They Leave Their Offices

In 2009, the largest marine protected area in the world consisting of 506,485 square kilometers including the Mariana Trench was established. President George Bush designated it as he was leaving his office. This is almost a customary of an American president that he designates a natural protected area, under National Monument Law, when he leaves his office. President Clinton designated several places and 5 other presidents named their own Monuments. We should learn this American example and we need to adopt a similar system for Japanese political leaders to name natural protected areas when they leave their offices.

Politicians who are elected by the current generation inevitably try to please their constituents of this generation. People of the current generation have been in pursuit of richer lives by exploiting nature and consuming natural resources without much restriction. As a result, ecosystem services, gifts from nature, have been globally degraded and reduced.

Nature is the foundation of human existence. The loss of nature means a loss of natural benefits for future generations, as well. If politicians want to consider the benefits of future generations, they should work towards building a sustainable society. That sustainable society will be also beneficial to our generation. We need to create a system that allows politicians to leave natural legacies when they leave office, even as they may work hard for the current generation while they keep their offices.

Even in Japan, there are some incumbent politicians who try to work not only for the current generation but also for

the future generations. For example, in Noda City in Chiba Prefecture and Toyooka City in Hyogo Prefecture, under their mayors' leadership, a new kind of agriculture that coexist with nature has been promoted by using farm lands to recover crested ibis and orientalstork. Also, 29 mayors of suburban municipalities around Tokyo have formed a coalition group to promote recovery of Japanese white ibis and storks in their communities.

A healthy nature has possibilities for future generations to receive ecological benefits from it or, if necessary, to develop it sustainably. Therefore, the current generation should protect natural areas without developing them and destroying the possibilities for the future generations. For that purpose, it would be better for us to establish a new system that encourages all political leaders such as prime ministers, mayors and even presidents and chairmen of corporations to designate and protect natural areas as their legacies when they are ready to leave their offices.

We need to make a new law that allows political leaders to designate natural areas as protected areas by sharing the notion that nature is fundamentally the common property of humanity.

The era of pursuit of myopic prosperity is over and an era of new paradigm is beginning.



In the U.S., many presidents designated natural protected areas when they left their offices.



We have been destroying nature in the name of politics of helping current generation.



There are some politicians who are willing to help future generations by promoting environmentally friendly agriculture.



Japan also needs to have a law that allows political leaders to designate natural protected areas as their legacies when they leave their offices.

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