



Regional Revitalization: Creating Value in Living in Outland Areas (Summary)

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Mayor of Toyooka

The Structure of Regional Revitalization

Regional revitalization refers to measures against depopulation. The predicted magnitude of population decline is massive and our demographics are being distorted as the young age groups are slimming rapidly. Our country and municipalities should, although belatedly, address this stern reality head-on. The scenario of Japan’s regional revitalization is to mitigate the national depopulation with the sum of positive regional achievements. In Toyooka, we have a two-tier strategy of easing the depopulation trend by setting targets and revitalizing our communities with fewer people.

Why is Toyooka depopulating? Low young adult recovery rate*

(*Rate of population inflow in the 20-29 age group versus outflow in the 10-19 age group)

The reason for Toyooka’s depopulation is simple: the excessive outflow in the 10-19 age group caused by approximately 80% of high school graduates leaving our city. On the other hand, we see a partially offsetting inflow in the 20-29 age group, especially at the time of college graduation. I think this is a typical development in our regional cities.

Why don’t young people return? Are regional communities socially deprived?

The young generation, as well as their parents and grandparents, are strongly confined by the idea that urban areas are rich and outland regions are poor—socially, economically and culturally. Our youth think that Toyooka (as well as other regions) is culturally deprived, and that returning there is a dead end. It is not just the rejection of a lower income in Toyooka. It is a denial of the value in living there.

Regional revitalization: Creation of value in outland life

The priority in our regional revitalization strategy should be the creation of value in living in Toyooka (and other such regions), or rather the rediscovery and reaffirmation of this value, because it actually already exists.

Toyooka’s strategy: Creating a small cosmopolis, a Local & Global City

To address the causes of depopulation, we specified two strategic agendas—improvement of the young adult recovery rate to battle socioeconomic depopulation, and marriage encouragement and birth rate improvement to fight natural depopulation. The slogan for our strategy against socioeconomic depopulation is a “Local & Global City (*Chiisana Sekai Toshi*)”, the creation of a globally recognized city even with its smaller population.

It is difficult to eradicate the ideas that big cities like Tokyo are impressive and small towns are insignificant,

that large corporations are praiseworthy and small companies are unimportant. Our tactic is to go directly to the world, bypassing the big cities, fulfill our potential, and receive global recognition in order to demolish the false hierarchy we hold tightly in our mindset.

Potential of a Local & Global City

We have spotted an opportunity for Toyooka in the trend of globalization. As globalization progresses, the world is coming to look alike wherever we go. Our regional uniqueness gives us an opportunity to empower ourselves globally. We must sophisticate our area to a level appreciated by the world.

Keys to achieving the Local & Global City

1. Preserve our heritage and pass it on

If we present the same face, the larger city will win. We should preserve what we have inherited, suggest new twists perhaps, and pass them on. Committing ourselves to long-term city development in which we can aggregate our efforts and ideas is the path we should take.

Example 1: Izushi Castle Town

Example 2: Izushi Eirakukan

Example 3: Kinosaki Onsen

Job creation through inbound tourism

Toyooka's inbound tourism policy also spurs job creation.

Efforts by Toyooka Tourism Innovation

Our two important goals are innovation in tourism, and innovation in our city through tourism.

2. Create and present art culture

Creation and presentation of art culture is our second key effort toward becoming a Local & Global City.

Kinosaki International Arts Center

Artists-in-residence can use the accommodations, rehearsal studio and hall free of charge for a maximum of three months. They can immerse themselves in their creative work 24 hours a day. Oriza Hirata, one of Japan's most renowned playwrights, has assumed the post of artistic director. The Center has thrived from its first year, and many artists have come from all over the world. Toyooka is connected directly to the world—not via Tokyo.

3. Form the environmental city “Toyooka Eco Valley”

- **Extinction and recovery of Oriental Storks**
- **Why return storks to the wild?**
- **Conservation center**
- **Recovery of wetlands**
- **Release to the wild**
- **Ramsar Convention registration**
- **Environmental economic strategies**
- **Stork-friendly farming**

Agriculture is an extremely important industry. Pesticides delivered the death blow to our endangered storks. Toyooka, in collaboration with its farmers, JA, and Hyogo's Agricultural Development and Extension Association, promulgated stork-friendly farming which does not rely on pesticides. Rice grown by

stork-friendly farms, branded “*Konotori Hagukumu Okome* (Rice to foster storks)” is highly regarded among consumers and marketed as a value-added product.

4. Foster citizens of our Local & Global City

- Hometown education
- English education
- Communication training through theater
- *Kore De Iinoda* (What I'm doing is right)

The number of foreign visitors to Toyooka will continue to grow. I hope and believe that our children will communicate with them and express themselves with pride in their hometown using English as a tool.

(Please see the full text: <https://goo.gl/ywDRmx>)



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Born November 4, 1956 in Toyooka, Hyogo Prefecture

Address:

499-1 Shimonomiya Toyooka, Hyogo

Education:

1987: Completed Master' Program in Business and Management, Graduate School of Economics, Osaka University

1978: Graduated from Faculty of Law, Kyoto University

Graduated from Toyooka High School, Toyooka Minami Junior High School and Mie Elementary School (all Toyooka public schools)

Career:

May 2013: 3rd term as Mayor of Toyooka

May 2009: 2nd term as Mayor of Toyooka

May 2005: Inaugurated as Mayor of the new City of Toyooka

March 2005: Resigned from the position of Mayor of old Toyooka as a result of municipal merger

July 2001: Inaugurated as Mayor of Toyooka

June 2001: Resigned from Hyogo Prefectural Assembly

April 2000: Appointed Chairman of Policy Research Council of the Liberal Democratic Party in Hyogo Prefectural Assembly

June 1999: Appointed Chairman of Standing General Affairs Committee

April 1999: Member of Hyogo Prefectural Assembly (3rd term)

June 1995: Member of Hyogo Prefectural Assembly (2nd term); Appointed Chairman of Standing Education Committee

April 1991: Member of Hyogo Prefectural Assembly (1st term)

December 1990: Resigned from Hyogo prefectural government

April 1985: Dispatched to Graduate School of Economics, Osaka University

April 1978: Joined Hyogo prefectural government

Publication: *Konotori no Tobu Yume* (July 2000)

Favorite maxims: “Dream big, set roots deep”

and “Hope, keep hoping, do not give up”

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