

After COVID-19

Mr. SHIMAOKA Seiya, Vice-Chairperson



Dear Readers:

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the readers of ACPF Mail Magazine No. 2. I am SHIMAOKA, and I was appointed Vice-Chairperson in August 2019. I am from an ACPF member company in the private sector. I am looking forward to working with you. I will do my

best.

First of all, I would like to deliver a get-well wish and gratitude to those who are having hardships because of COVID-19, directly or indirectly. I hope you can overcome the situation. The declaration of a state of emergency was lifted nationwide, and it seems the settling down of COVID-19 is coming into sight.

The Communities in great silence with the quarantine are avoiding going out, and business activities are retrieving full of spirits, and various activities are being resumed gradually with the observing of a “new life style”. However, infections are still being reported, and a second wave is feared, with no specific remedy or vaccine in sight. From now on, our tasks are how to control the spread of COVID-19, how to coexist with the virus, and how to recover our usual economic, social, and individual lives – as early as possible.

How have you been leading your lives in this situation of long quarantine and staying at home? I suppose that you are required to endure various difficulties and burdens. However, social reformation seems to be accelerating.

Taking an example from many salaried workers, let us avoid the “Three Cs”: Closed spaces with poor ventilation, Crowded places with many people nearby, and Close-contact settings. Systems to change the working times for workers (full flex time, discretionary work, etc.), and full teleworking have been expanding. In not only office work but also in some parts of sales and manufacturing activities, it was revealed that information collection and mutual communication could be implemented more smoothly than expected by making use of computers, mobile phones, and online meetings. In some categories of business, declines in productivity were less than anticipated. I think many workers have realized some advantages from having their workplaces near or at home, which creates more time to develop outside interests and to do things with family

members, by reducing commuting time and overtime at work.

In my own individual life, thanks to delivery service workers, I have deeply appreciated the value of online orders for daily necessities, such as high-quality dishes from good restaurants, and without the risk of contact from going out. Even in remote drinking parties and entertainment events and trips for leisure, we can enjoy them (as if we were there) thanks to display and sound devices developed by digital ICT. TV programs and newspapers today are full of these special features.

There are some arguments that these social reformations, having both good points and challenges, are going to take root more deeply even after COVID-19 has been conquered. This means that digital transformation through social reformation by permeation of ICT will lead to the emergence of an economy and society of “no contact”, “no face to face”, and “ICT virtual”, in which “the individual focused life is considered more important than organizational focused one”, and in which “nesting” and consuming culture becomes widespread. This is all to say that after COVID-19, our lives will probably not revert back to the circumstances we were used to before this pandemic. Furthermore, with the changes in industrial structure and thinking brought about by the pandemic, the world may now be “at a great turning point”.

When it comes to future prediction, I have to mention H.E., the late SAKAIYA Taichi, who showed leadership as the President of the ACPF for a long time. He led his life as a bureaucrat with economic expertise and was renowned as the producer of the Osaka Exposition and as a novelist who excelled not only at great historical novels such as “*Hideyoshi*” and “Genghis Khan, the man who created the world”, and he also wrote excellent futuristic novels such as “Negligence” (the Chinese character is the same as “Cut off Oil”), “The Mass Generation” (baby boom generation), and the “30th Year of *Heisei*”.

H.E. SAKAIYA observed that “Japan has revived every time it was defeated. First, Japan aimed for a stronger nation through the Meiji Restoration. Second, after the Second World War, Japan aimed to become richer, resulting in the country’s strong points such as “safety”, “security”, “cleanliness”, “equality”, and “punctuality”. Let’s emphasize “Japan, Safe Country!” to the maximum extent before the forthcoming Tokyo Olympic Games. H.E. SAKAIYA also edited the statistical booklet “Japan, How Safe?”, and dedicated himself to spreading the news about the charms of Japan. Thanks to his dedication, distribution of this booklet became one of the major activities of the ACPF, which strives for “Prosperity without Crime”. On the other hand, H.E. SAKAIYA repeatedly warned that “Japan is facing a decrease in population, with a tendency of

uniformity and communal society and a lack of delight that could come from greater individuality, diversity, and elements of surprise. In the future, let's try to build a delightful and diversified Japan by taking the opportunities of the Tokyo Olympic Games and the World Exposition.”

It is interesting to wonder how H.E. SAKAIYA would have predicted the world will change after COVID-19. Undoubtedly, as new ways of working in various fields and changes in business, social structure, and culture are born, the activities of ACPF will be altered. In responding to these changes, I would like to develop more significant activities which are face-to-face. Towards that end, I welcome your transmission of ACPF information and your honest opinions. I also hope that the continuous publication of the ACPF Mail Magazine will be of help in our activities. I would appreciate it very much if you would support the ACPF and read and share this ACPF Mail Magazine.