

は し が き

本書は、過去に金星堂から出版された日本と現代世界の諸問題を論じた三つのテキスト（*Global Challenges* 『人と地球を考える』1991、*Global Perspectives* 『地球社会の未来を考える』1996、*Issues of Global Concern* 『地球的問題群の背景を考える』2002）に続く第4弾である。ピーティー氏の現代地球社会を巡る諸問題に対する関心は相変わらずで、これまでと同様に主として環境問題にあり、これが本書でも再び取り上げられているが、熱帯雨林を守る方法や地球温暖化を阻止する方策が京都議定書以後の最新状況を踏まえてより具体的に議論されている。全地球共通のその他の課題である食糧、人口、エネルギーなども、最新の資料と知見に基づいて問題の概要と核心が分かりやすく論じられており、読者がこれらの問題を英文でしっかり読みながら自分で考える力を涵養できるように書かれている。本書の啓蒙的側面は明らかで、たとえば「捕鯨をめぐる論争」では、シーシェパードなど一連の環境保護団体の日本の捕鯨船への抗議活動やIWC商業捕鯨禁止の背景や日本側の事情も詳しく述べられている。著者自身の調査研究と思索が一体化されており、読み応えのあるエッセイになっている。

本書の内容は、1章「情報と誤報」、2章「熱帯雨林を守る方法」、3章「幸福とは」、4章「新製品への熱狂的傾倒」、5章「騒音対策」、6章「捕鯨論争」、7章「食糧問題」、8章「低賃金長時間労働」、9章「日本の人口問題」、10章「21世紀の貧困問題」、11章「京都議定書後の地球温暖化対策」、12章「原子力を巡るエネルギー問題」である。どれもこの地球上に住む者一人ひとりが幸せに人生を送るためには看過できない重要な問題であることに変わりはない。英文をじっくり読み込んで著者の論点を理解した上で、それらの問題を自分で考えてみて欲しい。タスクは、これを十分考慮して、「内容理解」を始め、「語彙増強」、「ディスカッションのためのテーマ」、「英作文のための課題」から成っており、英文読解は勿論のこと、各章で取り上げたテーマを読者自身がさらに興味を抱いて勉強できるようにとの工夫が施されている。ディスカッションと英作文用の課題には、時間をかけ努めて自分の頭で考えた独自の意見を述べることを強く望みたい。これらに真面目に取り組めば、将来、特

に人文学・社会学の分野で本格的な論文を書くためのしっかりとした基礎が構築できると言っても過言ではないであろう。

2008年10月

編注者

Contents

1. Information and Misinformation	1
2. Saving Tropical Rainforests: Creative Approaches	8
3. Concerning Happiness	16
4. Gizmo Addiction	24
5. Coping with Noise	31
6. The Whaling Debate	38
7. Food: Not Just a Commodity	46
8. Sweatshop Labor	54
9. Japan's Declining Population	61
10. Poverty: Meeting the Millennium Development Goals	68
11. Global Warming: Beyond Kyoto	76
12. Energy: Is Nuclear Power Part of the Solution?	83
Notes	92



1. Information and Misinformation

CD1-01

For people who thrive on information, this is an exciting time to be alive, with daily delivery of newspapers, magazines and television programs, and 24-hour Internet access. However, not all of the information we get is reliable. In their rush to meet publishing deadlines, journalists often omit or fail to confirm essential details; and the Internet is full of traps for information seekers who wander off the beaten track. Mistakes are no big deal if we just want to know the result of a football match, but they are of major significance if we are seeking an appropriate drug for a rare disease or trying to find out about an accident at a nearby nuclear power plant.

Even before the advent of the Internet, there were plen-

ty of myths created by pranksters, advertising agencies, advocacy groups and even governments. Among the most famous spoofs were the widely-quoted scientific report on the mysterious powers of pyramids and the iconic photograph of the Loch Ness Monster, both of which were eventually revealed as hoaxes by their creators. While providing harmless entertainment, these also serve as a reminder of the need to be skeptical of any information that does not come from impeccable sources.

Misleading claims made by manufacturers are more serious, and in many countries these may result in penalties. In the case of governments, however, the only penalty for issuing false or misleading information is embarrassment when they are caught out. The Japanese government-funded Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation once produced a cartoon film showing a character named Pluto Kun drinking plutonium, with the intention of convincing the public that nuclear power was safe. It backfired, however, when it was denounced as highly irresponsible by independent experts and ridiculed by the international media.

Advocacy groups, too, have been guilty of spreading false and misleading information. For example, there are various phony research institutes dedicated to convincing people that global warming is a myth, which were set up by major companies likely to be adversely affected by policies to prevent global warming. Despite losing the media battle, they and their corporate sponsors managed to delay action for a lost decade that the next generation should never forgive them for.

On the other side of the political spectrum, environ-

mentalists do not always get their facts right either. For example, when Shell Oil Company announced plans to dump an old oil platform in the sea, Greenpeace protested that it was full of toxic chemicals and would be an environmental catastrophe. After an aggressive campaign, Greenpeace succeeded in persuading Shell to tow the rig to land and dismantle it there. It then became clear that the amount of toxic chemicals was much smaller than Greenpeace had estimated, and that dumping the oil rig in the sea would have been better for the environment. The lesson to be drawn is not that environmentalists are deliberately distorting the facts, or that the best way to get rid of stuff is to dump it in the ocean, but that we should be prepared to question what we read and hear, even when it comes from people and organizations that we trust and respect and when it supports our own views.

One person who did just that was British environmentalist Chris Goodall. In order to verify the conventional belief that walking is the most environment-friendly way to get around, he compared a 4.8-km journey to the local shop by car and on foot, and factored in not only the carbon dioxide discharged by the car but also the 180 calories of energy burned by the walker and the food that would be needed to replace those calories. Surprisingly, he found that if the walker ate 100 grams of beef in order to regain the lost calories, it would result in four times as much carbon being discharged compared to going by car, because so much energy is used in meat production. Even if the walker drank a half liter of milk instead, it would still result in more carbon emissions than the short drive to the store would. A shallow

interpretation of Goodall's findings might lead to the conclusion that driving is better for the environment than walking. However, that is not what Goodall is telling us. If we examine the problem more carefully, we find that the real issue is the role of large-scale agriculture in global warming. To confirm this, we might refer to a report by the US Department of Agriculture – a firm supporter of modern farming methods – which tells us that agriculture is responsible for 17% of US energy consumption.

Transport and agriculture also feature in another interesting example of challenged assumptions. A large amount of cut flowers is flown from Kenya to the UK every year. This provides poor Kenyans with a useful source of income, but also results in significant carbon emissions. Environmentalists were at odds with development agencies over whether this trade should be discouraged. However, it turns out that producing the same amount of flowers in a heated greenhouse in the Netherlands results in the emission of five times as much carbon. But before jumping to conclusions and outsourcing all flower production to Kenya, we should first ask ourselves if we need cut flowers at all.

In a recent issue of *Positive Living* entitled “The Tree that Could Save the Planet”, a project to plant a million Japanese paulownia trees across the US was introduced. According to the article, the paulownia absorbs ten times more carbon dioxide than any other species of tree. Much as I admire both the magazine and the tree, I found this somewhat hard to believe. I immediately turned to Google to see whether or not the claim was true. If you would like to know the answer too, log on to the Internet and find out

what the experts have to say.

COMPREHENSION CHECK 1

Answer yes, no, or not clear from the text.

According to the text, does the writer think

1. it doesn't matter if information provided on the Internet is wrong?
2. governments are an impeccable source of information?
3. the Pluto Kun cartoon achieved its goals?
4. global warming is a myth?
5. the safest way to dispose of anything is to dump it in the sea?
6. driving is better for the environment than walking?
7. Britons should buy flowers grown in Kenya?
8. the paulownia could help solve an environmental problem?

COMPREHENSION CHECK 2

1. Why do journalists sometimes make mistakes?
2. What can we learn from the stories of pyramid power and the photo of the monster?
3. What was the aim of the Pluto Kun cartoon film?
4. What did some major companies do in order to delay action on global warming?
5. How was the Shell oil platform disposed of in the end?
6. What should we learn from the Shell oil rig case?
7. What issue lies behind Goodall's surprising conclusion?
8. Which has a greater impact on the environment, flying flowers from Kenya to the UK or growing them in heated

greenhouses?

9. Why do some people want to plant a lot of paulownia trees?

VOCABULARY CHECK

Fill each gap with a suitable word or phrase from the text.

1. Your homework must be handed in by next Friday: that is the _____.
2. _____ groups campaign for various causes, such as conservation and social welfare.
3. A lot of people believed the story, but I was _____.
4. It is very _____ to pretend that plutonium is harmless.
5. The Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation was _____ to the promotion of nuclear energy.
6. We believed the story, but in fact it was _____.
7. During the _____ from 1990 to 1999, environmental problems received a great deal of attention.
8. Was it just a careless mistake, or did they _____ give us the wrong information?
9. We couldn't get tickets for the concert, so we went to a movie _____.
10. We thought it would rain heavily, but it _____ to be a fine day.

DISCUSSION

1. Which source of information do you trust most: television, newspapers or the Internet?

2. What do you think of Chris Goodall's conclusion?
3. When shopping, should we favour goods produced in developing countries or locally produced goods?

COMPOSITION

Write a short composition about one of the following:

- a myth that many people believe or used to believe
- the activities of Greenpeace
- paulownia trees and their benefits to society