In Japan, it was once said that, at the longest, a person’s life is fifty years. However, we now live in an age when the average life-span for men exceeds eighty years and that for women surpasses eighty-seven. Indeed, a normal life is considered to be ninety years. Having been born into this long-lived society, we now face three main challenges.

The first is at the personal level: We must live with a life plan that extends over ninety years. Naturally, the ways in which people live differ when they can expect to live fifty and ninety. Today, not only do we live nearly twice as long as before, but we must take the initiative to plan our lives. A diverse range of life plans is now possible.

Another challenge is at the social level: We must reexamine our society’s infrastructure. Our communities and social systems were built at a time when Japan’s population was distributed in the shape of a pyramid, with many young people at the bottom. Consequently, they are ill-equipped to address the needs of a long-lived society, needs that our nation will have to confront in the years to come. We must rebuild our communities to give them physical infrastructure (e.g., homes and transport systems) and human infrastructure (medical care, nursing care, education, and employment schemes) that benefit a long-lived society. And the third challenge is at the industrial level: We must nurture products, services, and systems that can be instrumental in resolving the problems presented by our aging society into key Japanese industries. The realization of diverse life plans and rebuilding of social infrastructure will only be achievable with the development and supply of products and services by industry. Japan leads the way in grappling with a long-lived society. Though some years behind Japan, other countries of the world will also eventually face similar challenges. And when they do, they will create a major market.

Japan’s young generation will simultaneously take the lead in tackling these challenges and enjoy the emergence of new possibilities as a result. Having no model to follow, they will have no option but to find their own way forward. They will need to possess outstanding conceptual ability, a broad perspective, and a precise strategy. One after another, young people who have benefited from five years of superb education in “Science for Development of a Super Mature Society,” which is part of the Program for Leading Graduate School at Keio University, will be entering private businesses, government, research institutes, and international organizations. I look forward to seeing what their leadership can achieve with profound expectation.

日本では長らく人生50年といえばされてきたが、今や平均寿命は男性80年、女性が87年を超え、人生90年と言われる時代が到来した。長寿社会に生まれた私たちは課題は大きく分けて3つある。一つは90年人生を設計して生きるという個人レベルの課題。人生50年時代と人生90年時代の生活方はおずと異なる。人生が倍近く長くなっただけでなく、人生を自ら設計する時代になった。多様な人生設計が可能である。もう一つは社会のインフラの見直しという社会レベルの課題。私たちが住む「まち」や社会システムが若い世代で多くがピラミッド型をしていた時代につけられたもので、これからが直面する長寿社会のニーズにはとても対応できない。住宅や交通機関のようなハードと医療・介護、教育、雇用制度などのソフ。トを長寿社会にふさわしいものに作りかえる必要がある。3つの課題が高齢化の課題解決に資する製品やサービス、システムづくりを日本の基幹産業に育てるという産業界の課題である。多様な人生設計や社会インフラのづくりなおし産業界によるものやサービスの開発と供給化には実現しない。日本は長寿社会のフロンタンナー。世界中の国々が日本から学びつつ同じような課題に直面し、大きな市場を形成する。

長寿社会の課題を解決しておけるのも、新たな可能性を享受も含め新世代。先を行くモデルはなく、自らの経験を基にしていくことも必要。単純な発想や広い展望、戦略が求められる。慶應義塾大学リーディング大学院「超成熟社会発展のサイエンス」で5年間の卒業した教育を受けた若者が企業、行政機関、研究機関、国際機関に次々と飛び立っていく。彼らのリーダーシップを心から期待している。