

Significance of energy saving in energy security in North East Asia

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Importance of energy saving

- is that energy saving is an effective measure to achieve middle and long term objectives in terms of promoting energy security and counter-measures against global warming.

Why has energy saving been promoted in Japan?

- Geographical factors such as Japan's land area and climatic conditions can be pointed out. However political, economic and social factors have counted more than these factors.

Important element for energy saving

Market mechanisms have played a large role in energy saving through energy prices. As was seen in the oil crisis in the 1970s, price hikes in imported oils can be passed relatively easily on to the final consumer prices including oil products and electricity & gas prices in Japan because of high dependence upon import energy.

As the result, companies endeavored to shift to a more energy saving oriented industrial structure and to intensify the development of energy saving technology.

Consumers became more energy saving minded by choosing energy saving equipment and appliances.

Characteristic of Japan's culture

- Japanese success in energy saving is backed up by its culture of valuing things and avoiding any waste traditionally nurtured by the Japanese people throughout its history since the 17th century Edo Period.
- It is backed up by the public's growing awareness on the environmental issue, the 3 R (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) movement is widely supported.
- The Japanese phrase “Mottai Nai” meaning “too good to be wasted” is more and more uttered among the Japanese people. There are many Japanese people who insist that Japan should communicate the message of this phrase widely to the rest of the world.

Observations on “Energy security and building up of an energy saving oriented society in N.E.Asia”,

- It will be that both hardware and software measures are essential for the success of energy saving policies.
- In promoting cooperation with developing countries in Asia in the field of energy saving in the future, transfers of technologies are important not only in hardware aspects but also in software aspects such as socio-economic systems and institutions as well as culture of valuing things and avoiding waste.

2. Recent international efforts to cope with energy saving

- Essential participation of developing countries
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(1) The issue of global warming and energy security

- High resources prices resulting from the tight energy market and conditions of unstable supplies of energy resources, these shall work as factors constraining economic development in developing countries.
- In this connection, to preserve valuable domestic resources through efficient energy consumption and to save the cost of overseas resources import is as important as to secure stable energy supplies.
- Improvement in energy use efficiency, namely energy saving will also contribute effectively toward solution of the global warming issue as it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by energy uses.

(2) International energy saving cooperation initiatives led by Japan

- In the New National Energy Strategy released in May 2006, Japan set for itself the goal of becoming the frontrunner in energy saving and spelled out the Asia Energy and Environment Cooperation Strategy. The Strategy defined it as an element of the strategic “menu” to transfer to neighboring developing countries in Asia energy saving technologies Japan has developed and stocked ever since the oil crises.
- The Asia Energy Saving Program spelled out bilateral policy dialogue, action plan making and providing assistance to Asian countries in their efforts for institutional framework building.

(3) Energy security in North East Asia (Cebu Declaration)

- The second East Asia Summit Meeting adopted the Cebu Declaration on Energy Security in East Asia in January 2007 .
- The Declaration spelled out 5 goals to enhance energy security in East Asia. These goals included;
 - (1) to improve the environmental friendliness of fossil fuel use technologies,
 - (2) to reduce dependence on fossil fuels,
 - (3) to promote the development of the intra-regional electricity power market,
 - (4) to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases,
 - (5) to promote energy related investment and infrastructure development.

(4) International Conference of Major Countries on Counter-Measures against Global Warming

- The International Conference of Major Countries on Counter-Measures against Global Warming was held on September 27 and 28 in Washington. Foreign Minister Koumura represented Japan.
- Prior to this Conference, the UN High Level Meeting on Climate Change was held. Former Prime Minister Mori participated as Special Envoy of Prime Minister Abe and delivered a speech.

Concluding remarks

- As former Prime Minister Mori's proposal on September 24, It must be remembered that changes in lifestyles and behavior patterns will contribute substantially to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In Japan the government urges the people to set air conditioning at a temperature of more than 28 degrees Celsius in the summer and at a temperature of less than 20 degrees Celsius in the winter.
- It is proposed that each government should urge people to set office air conditioning at an efficient and moderate temperature. This proposal should be introduced in the United Nations subject to the agreement of Member countries.
- "You suggested it, so try it first". 今王必欲致士、先從魄者(十八史略)