



Concern about the Environment: Responses Vary from Region to Region Deepening Anxiety about Global Warming

Results of the Fourth Annual

“Questionnaire on Environmental Problems and the Survival of Humankind”

The Asahi Glass Foundation, chaired by Jiro Furumoto, is pleased to announce the results of its fourth “Questionnaire on Environmental Problems and the Survival of Humankind.” This annual survey reveals the opinions and perceptions of specialists from both governmental organizations (GOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) regarding the progress of efforts to conserve the environment since the Earth Summit. The following are highlights of this year’s results, the compilation of which was supervised by Professor Akio Morishima of Nagoya University’s law department.

1-1 Humanity in Crisis—Only three hours and 11 minutes until the darkest hour, but Japan remains optimistic.

If we view concern about humankind’s prospects for survival on a twelve-hour clock, then the average response time of 8:49 leaves only three hours and 11 minutes until the clock strikes 12. Of all regions surveyed, respondents from Japan showed the least concern.

1-2 The State of the Global Environment in 50 Years—Pessimists Hold the Majority.

Fifty-three percent of respondents believe that the state of the global environment in 50 years will be worse than today.

2 Overconsumption-Throwaway Lifestyles—Japanese Respondents Report Low Capacity for Change.

Overall, responses indicated that willingness to change to more frugal lifestyles was unchanged from last year’s levels.

3-1 Progress on Areas Covered by Agenda 21—At a Virtual Standstill.

Since the Earth Summit, the most significant progress was perceived in such areas as NGO activities, the promotion of environmental education, and activities by local governments and citizens’ groups.

3-2 Important Measures for Solving Environmental Problems in Your Own Country —North-South Differences Apparent.

Respondents from economically advanced countries tended to consider changes in lifestyles and in economic systems as most important, while respondents from developing regions generally emphasized finding solutions to overpopulation and poverty, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and environmental education.

4-1 Global Warming Overwhelmingly Recognized as a Serious Problem.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents viewed global warming as a serious problem. Respondents from Japan, however, showed the least concern.

4-2 Recyclable Energy Supported as Most Effective Measure to Combat Global Warming.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents cited the development and promotion of recyclable energy resources, such as solar, wind, and biomass power, as important for dealing with global warming.

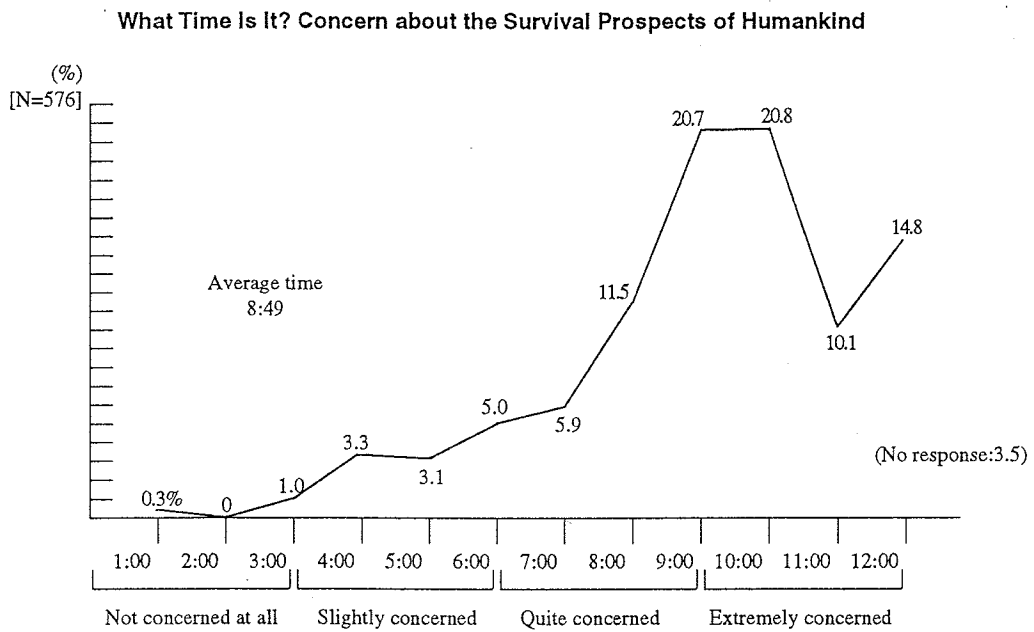
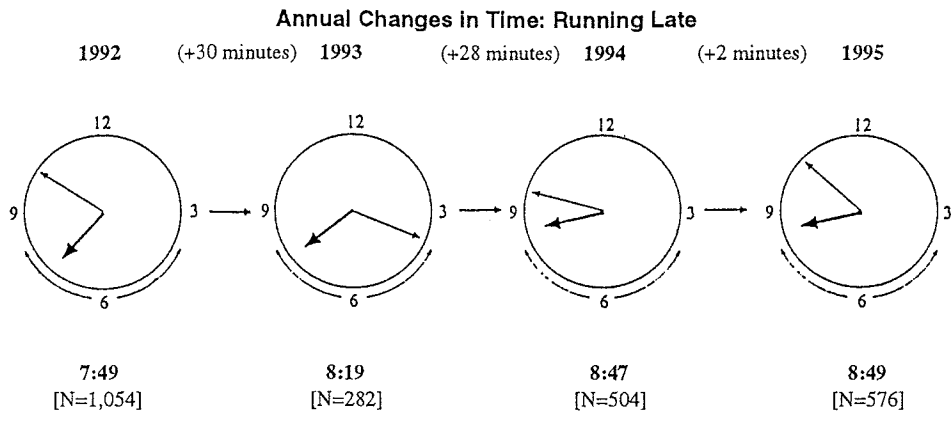
Optimism in Japan

Japan’s environmental experts included in this survey view environmental problems and prospects for their solution optimistically. Compared with respondents from other regions, active efforts to confront these problems seem lacking.

- Regarding humankind’s prospects for survival, Japan’s concern was the lowest of all nine regions surveyed for the second year in a row.
- Along with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Japan was the most negative about making changes to more frugal lifestyles.
- Of all regions surveyed, respondents from Japan showed the least concern about global warming.

1- 1 Humanity in Crisis—Only three hours and 11 minutes until the darkest hour, but Japan remains optimistic.

If we view concern about humankind’s prospects for survival on a twelve-hour clock, then the average response time of 8:49 leaves only three hours and 11 minutes until the clock strikes 12. Although this year’s average response advanced only slightly from that of 1994, there is a clear pattern of deepening concern from year to year.



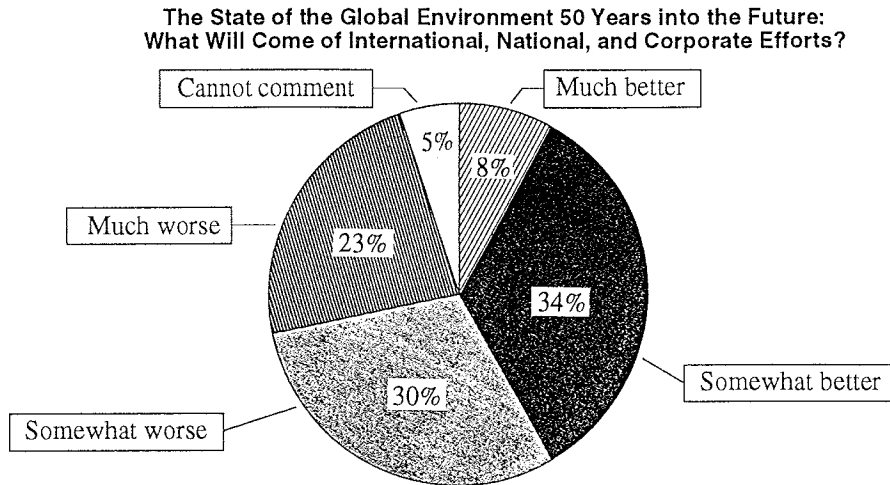
Large regional differences are apparent. Serious concern was recorded by respondents from Oceania, Asia, and Africa. Concern was weaker among respondents from Japan, the United States & Canada, and Western Europe, with the least concern of all registered in Japan.

Breakdown of Responses

Oceania	9:44	Eastern Europe & the former Soviet Union	9:29	Western Europe	9:02	NGOs	9:04
Asia	9:41	Latin America	9:23	United States & Canada	8:52	GOs	8:37
Africa	9:33	Middle East	9:09	Japan	8:08		

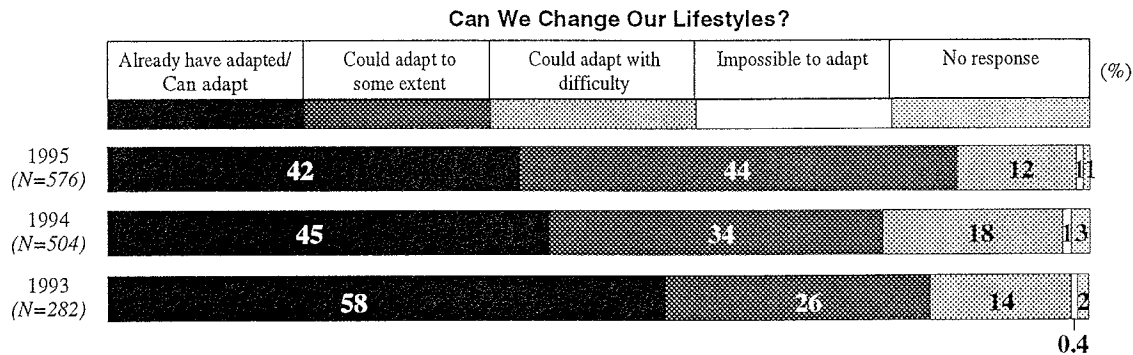
1-2 The State of the Global Environment in 50 Years—Pessimists Hold the Majority.

Fifty-three percent of respondents answered that the state of the environment in 50 years will be “much worse” or “somewhat worse” than today. Nevertheless, respondents from Oceania, Asia, and Africa were comparatively optimistic. Respondents from Japan were the most pessimistic.

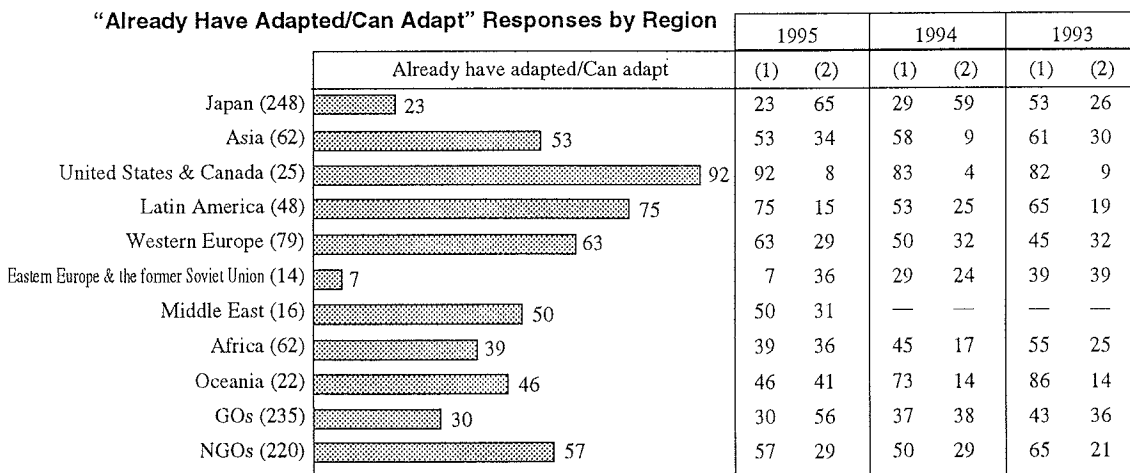


2 Overconsumption-Throwaway Lifestyles—Japanese Respondents Report Low Capacity for Change.

Overall, responses indicated that willingness to change to more frugal lifestyles was unchanged from last year’s levels. No progress was shown in this area.



The average “Already have adapted/Can adapt” response from Japan was only 23%, representing a drop of six percentage points from the previous year.



Note: Column (1) indicates percentage of “Already have adapted/Can adapt” responses
Column (2) indicates percentage of “Already have adapted/Can adapt” responses

3-1 Progress on Areas Covered by Agenda 21—At a Virtual Standstill.

*Percent figures reflect the combination of responses in the categories of “significant progress” and “some progress.”

Of the 23 items respondents were asked to evaluate, the most progress since the Earth Summit was reported in the areas of NGO activities (69%), promotion of environmental education (64%), and activities by local governments and citizens’ groups (62%). The least progress was seen in areas such as changes in economic systems leading to greater conservation of the environment (15%), efforts to establish the necessary capital-creating mechanisms for the preservation of the environment (20%), and efforts to halt desertification (20%).

The gap in perceptions between respondents from GOs and NGOs was considerably smaller than last year.

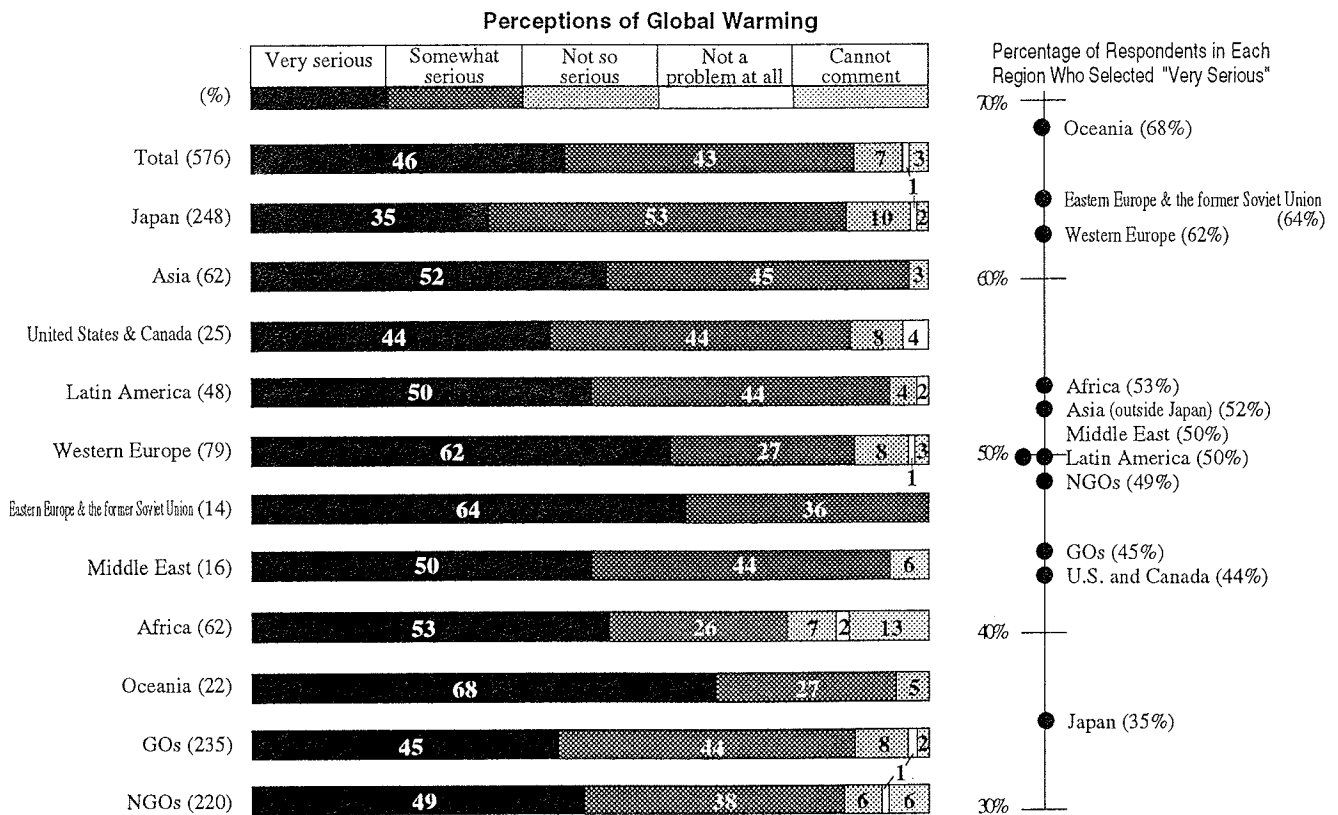
3-2 Important Measures for Solving Environmental Problems in Your Own Country —North-South Differences Apparent.

Respondents from economically advanced countries generally considered changes in lifestyles and in economic systems as most important, while respondents from developing regions tended to emphasize finding solutions to overpopulation and poverty, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and environmental education.

4-1 Global Warming Overwhelmingly Recognized as a Serious Problem.

Respondents who consider global warming either “very serious” or “somewhat serious” made up 89% of the total.

By region, strong concern was expressed by respondents from Oceania (68% answered “very serious”), Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (64%), and Western Europe (62%). By way of contrast, only 35% of respondents from Japan answered “very serious,” the lowest level of all regions surveyed.



4-2 Recyclable Energy Supported as Most Effective Measure to Combat Global Warming.

From a total of 14 items, the following were chosen as the most effective measures against global warming: the development and promotion of recyclable energy resources (58%), expansion of tree cover (35%), environmental taxes (31%), and individual energy conservation efforts (31%).

**Facts about the Fourth Annual
"Questionnaire on Environmental Problems and the Survival of Humankind"**

Supervision of compilation: Professor Akio Morishima, Law Department,
Nagoya University

Response period: Questionnaires were sent out in April 1995 with a return
deadline of July 10, 1995.

Questionnaire respondent pool: Selected from members of GOs and NGOs
in the United Nations Environment Program and Asahi Glass Foundation
databases.

Aim: This questionnaire was designed to gauge the perceptions of respondents,
mainly specialists from both GOs and NGOs concerned with global envi-
ronmental problems, regarding the progress of efforts to conserve the
environment since the United Nations Conference on Environment and
Development, or Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. This
year we have examined two additional topics: reactions to the Interna-
tional Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo
in 1994, as well as the issue of global warming.

Questionnaires mailed: 2,656

Questionnaires returned: 576*

Response rate: 21.7%

*Questionnaires returned after July 10, 1995, are not reflected in these results.

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