

# Painless Civilization and the Fate of Humanity:

## A Philosophical Investigation

Masahiro Morioka

Hasan Ali Karasar and Şafak Oğuz (eds.)

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# **Painless Civilization and the Fate of Humanity: A Philosophical Investigation**

*Masahiro Morioka*

## **Introduction**

*Painless civilization* is a term I coined in my Japanese book of the same title, which was published in 2003. Contemporary civilization aims to provide pleasure and comfort and eliminate pain and suffering as much as possible. This is especially evident in advanced countries. Contemporary civilization is moving toward a painless civilization. However, in a painless civilization, we are deprived of the joy of life, which is considered a fundamental source of meaning in life, and we are led toward the situation of drowning in a sea of pleasure. This is a kind of dystopia, and we cannot find an easy way to escape from it. It is important to pay special attention to this aspect of contemporary civilization when we think about the future of our planet.

The reasons that I came up with the idea of a painless civilization were as follows. The first was an episode in which a patient was in a deep coma in intensive care. A nurse was caring for the patient, who did not feel any pain or suffering, just slept peacefully and comfortably in a clean, temperature-controlled hospital room. The nurse said to me, “In the end, isn’t this the form of human existence modern civilization is trying to create?” I was shocked to hear this and began to think that we might be destined to be peaceful, happy, and painless inhabitants of modern cities surrounded by advanced technologies.

The second was the paradox of addictive experiences. When people are absorbed in addictive experiences, such as gambling, alcohol, pornography, and self-injury, many of them have contradictory emotions: on the one hand, they feel strong pleasure, but on the other hand, they have the sense that what they really want to pursue is not that kind of pleasure. Here, pursuing pleasure does not lead to true happiness and fulfillment. However, because they are deeply trapped by addictive and repetitive pleasure, they cannot find an escape from this tragic, vicious cycle.

Third, I was confronted with a philosophical problem concerning pleasure and pain. Looking back on my past experiences, I cannot but feel that pleasure seeking and pain elimination do not necessarily lead to true joy and happiness. Engaging in these pursuits made me lose sight of something very important that is necessary for living a meaningful life. I could not find deep fulfillment in life just by increasing pleasure and decreasing pain. However, strangely enough, many people did not agree with me. They argued that it was a good thing to increase pleasure and decrease pain in almost all situations. I sensed a major philosophical problem here.

The fourth is the problem of the environmental crisis and capitalism. In the 1980s, I studied the ethics of global environmental problems. I read many books that argued that one of the fundamental causes of today's environmental crisis is global capitalism. Some of these books became bestsellers in Japan, driven by the power of capitalism. I was surprised that the books that criticized the movement of global capitalism were printed in large numbers and worked as driving forces for advancing the movement of capitalism itself. I thought something new was happening. I sensed that this was a problem that should be examined from a civilizational perspective.

### **The Desire of the Body**

The book *Painless Civilization* was published in Japanese in 2003 and has been translated into English (Chapters One through Three are available on the internet),<sup>1</sup> Korean (the entire book)<sup>2</sup>, and Turkish (Chapter One, under the title of *Acısız Medeniyet*)<sup>3</sup>.

A painless civilization is a civilization in which the system of enhancing pleasure and comfort and eliminating pain and suffering extends to every corner of society. Today's society has not reached this stage, but it is certain that contemporary civilization is heading toward a painless civilization. We can see a variety of signs of painless civilization in many cities in advanced countries. It is hard to criticize a painless civilization because an act of criticism

1 Masahiro Morioka, "Painless Civilization 1." Tokyo Philosophy Project, 2003, 2021. Downloadable from: <https://www.philosophyoflife.org/tpp/painless01.pdf>

2 Masahiro Morioka, "The Concept of Painless Civilization and the Philosophy of Biological Evolution: With Reference to Jonas, Freud, and Bataille", *The Review of Life Studies*, Vol.13, 2022, p.16-34. <http://www.lifestudies.org/press/rls1304.pdf>

3 Masahiro Morioka, "Painless Civilization 2." Tokyo Philosophy Project, 2003, 2023. Downloadable from: <https://www.philosophyoflife.org/tpp/painless02.pdf>

can be utilized by a painless civilization itself as a tool for further advancing its movement.

In order to better understand what a painless civilization is, let us look at the history of human civilization. A painless civilization is an evolutionary form of self-domestication, a concept proposed by Egon von Eickstedt in the 1930s. Von Eickstedt argued that humans domesticated not only animals but also themselves in the process of forming human civilizations. This means that humans have modified themselves in the same manner as they have modified animals, such as goats and sheep.

The following are the main characteristics of self-domestication, expanded and redefined by me:

- a. Humans have placed themselves in an artificial environment.
- b. Humans have built a system that can automatically supply food.
- c. Technology has enabled humans to overcome natural threats.
- d. Humans have learned to manage their reproduction (e.g., family planning and reproductive medicine).
- e. Humans have tried to improve their quality of life (e.g., eugenics and recent reproductive technologies).
- f. Humans have gradually gained control over death (e.g., elimination of unexpected deaths and death with dignity).
- g. The emergence of voluntary subordination (voluntary subordination to a comfortable modern civilization).

We can easily find these phenomena in advanced countries around the world today. A painless civilization is a civilization in which the self-domestication of humans develops to the highest possible degree. Our society is heading toward a painless civilization, and all of us are being forcibly incorporated into the current of painlessness. The four episodes described in the beginning of this paper are examples of self-domestication that are growing in a society moving toward a painless civilization. However, what is the driving force that is moving us toward this development?

I proposed the hypothesis that there is a basic desire inside human beings—the “desire of the body”—and it drove humans to domesticate themselves. The desire of the body has five aspects:

- a. Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.
- b. Maintaining the current state of affairs and planning for stability.
- c. Expanding and increasing itself if there is an opening.
- d. Sacrificing other people.
- e. Controlling (human) lives, (biological) life, and nature.

The desire of the body is deeply imprinted into human life. We cannot easily escape from this desire.

A painless civilization is a civilization whose movement is driven by these five aspects of the “desire of the body,” which are inscribed in the deepest layer of our existence. Let us examine these aspects one by one.

First, in a painless civilization, we seek pleasure and comfort and avoid pain and suffering. Social systems that support these actions extend into every corner of our society.

Second, in a painless civilization, we maintain the current state of affairs if it is considered beneficial to us, and we seek to protect the stability of this state.

Third, in a painless civilization, we seek to expand our territory and sphere of influence if there is a chance.

Fourth, in a painless civilization, we sometimes seek to benefit by sacrificing others, and we close our eyes to such exploitative actions, and many technologies that help turn our eyes from them have been invented.

Fifth, in a painless civilization, we control our lives’ itineraries, the lives and deaths of creatures (including humans), and the natural environment as much as possible. This control is made possible by scientific and social technologies. This is the most important characteristic of a painless civilization.

The five aspects of the “desire of the body” are deeply inscribed in humans. This is because four of the five were created long before the human race appeared on Earth. We must take the history of biological evolution into account when we think about the “desire of the body.” Its second characteristic, “maintaining the current state of affairs and planning for stability,” was formed when primitive cells, which were the ancestors of all creatures on Earth, appeared four billion years ago. They began maintaining their cell structures by exchanging particles through their membranes. This is called metabolism. The third characteristic, “expanding and increasing itself if there is an opening,” was formed when the primitive cells began dividing themselves and

proliferating. The fourth characteristic, “sacrificing other people,” was formed when unicellular organisms began eating other unicellular organisms on ancient Earth. This is called phagocytosis. (In this context, we should say, “sacrificing other *creatures*”). This behavior was handed down to other multicellular creatures through biological evolution. The first characteristic, “seeking pleasure and avoiding pain,” was formed when animals equipped with central nervous systems appeared on Earth. In addition to the above, the fifth characteristic, “controlling (human) lives, (biological) life, and nature,” was formed when the human race appeared and created civilizations by making use of controlling technologies.<sup>4</sup>

It is striking that four of the five characteristics of the “desire of the body” were formed before the appearance of the human race. We have four billion years of biological evolution inside our bodies and are heavily bound by it. I believe that this is why the “desire of the body” is so deeply inscribed in us and it is very difficult for us to escape from the movement toward painless civilization.

### **Technologies in a Painless Civilization**

The fifth characteristic of the desire of the body, “controlling (human) lives, (biological) life, and nature,” has led to the creation of a network of technologies that seek to control everything in society and society’s relationship with the surrounding nature. These technologies function as fundamental driving forces for advancing painless civilization.

Technologies in a painless civilization have at least three important characteristics: a. preventive pain elimination, b. double-controlled structures, and c. pain elimination devices.

The first is “preventive pain elimination.” This is a preventive or preemptive action that seeks to eliminate future pain before it actually emerges. In the book *Painless Civilization I*, I wrote, “This is a system that not only eliminates suffering that already exists but carefully predicts suffering that could arise to threaten us in the future and preventatively eradicates here and now whatever seems likely to be a cause of this future suffering” (p. 30). A good example is cancer screenings; if we find cancer in its early stages, we can remove it quickly. This is a typical act of preventive pain elimination.

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4 For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the desire of the body and biological evolution, see my 2022 paper “The Concept of Painless Civilization and the Philosophy of Biological Evolution: With Reference to Jonas, Freud, and Bataille”.

Another example is selective abortion. Today, we can test amniotic fluids to see whether a fetus has severe disabilities, and if it has, we can abort it under certain conditions. This technology can also be applied to fertilized eggs that are artificially made outside a woman's body. Eggs that have disabilities will simply be discarded. The number of human traits that can be tested is expected to radically increase in the future. A painless civilization is a civilization where these kinds of technologies can be found throughout society.

At first sight, it is unclear what the problem with preventive pain elimination is.

The problem arises when technologies for preventive pain elimination accumulate in society. In such a society, where we are surrounded by a variety of preventive pain elimination technologies, we realize for the first time that we are being deprived of the possibilities of encountering otherness and being reborn, which are very important for living an authentic life.

However, painless civilization is clever. It deceives us by using double-controlled structures. So, what is a double-controlled structure?

A double-controlled structure is a structure that a painless civilization creates in our society. A painless civilization never tries to erase all pain and suffering from our lives. It seeks to eliminate pain and suffering from society as a whole, but at the same time, it intentionally leaves pain and suffering in small corners of our society, and it even positively brings our attention to them. A painless civilization positively leaves room for us to be able to enjoy small amounts of pain and the expectation of risks there.

A good example of this is the human-centered, wise control of the environment that will be found in future nature parks in which we can enjoy the wilderness and the sense of risk of losing our lives in untamed nature, but in reality, we never lose our lives and seldom injure ourselves because the natural environment in the area is wisely controlled as a whole by painless technologies. Because these painless technologies are sophisticatedly hidden within the controlled environment, we do not recognize their existence during the period we are enjoying the natural park.

A nature park that extends to a planet scale is the goal of the environmental protection that a painless civilization seeks to advance. I call this a "double-controlled structure": here and there, we can encounter the uncontrolled violence of nature, but true dangers are almost completely suppressed by technologies.

Inside such a double-controlled structure, we are encouraged to actively enjoy a sense of risk and to experience pain and accidents in nature. At the same time, we are allowed to forget that the whole system is skillfully controlled. This shows that a painless civilization never seeks to eliminate all the pain and suffering we encounter in our daily lives. On the contrary, it makes us concentrate on the non-severe pains, and in exchange, it makes us forget that the whole system is sophisticatedly controlled.

In other words, a double-controlled structure is a structure in which people's freedom to escape from society's control is secured in small parts of society, whereas in society as a whole, such freedom is almost completely controlled. A painless civilization tries to deceive us as much as possible by using pain elimination devices. So, what is a pain elimination device?

A pain elimination device is a device that seeks to eliminate pain and suffering from our lives and make us forget that we are being controlled by a painless civilization's double-controlled structures. Painkillers, alcohol, and narcotics can work as pain elimination devices at the physical level. At the psychological level, psychotherapy and religion can work as pain elimination devices that reduce mental and spiritual pain.

However, the most important devices are 1) mass media, 2) discourses that influence our way of thinking, and 3) entertainment industries, such as TV shows, movies, dramas, and music, that can divert our attention away from the vague anxieties that we sometimes feel in a society moving toward a painless civilization. These entertainment devices circulate various moving stories of love and compassion and argue that although it is true that we live in a society full of pain and suffering, we will finally be able to reach a state of happiness and fulfillment through the power of love and compassion. And finally, we are guided toward the opinion that the basic framework of a painless civilization does not have to be altered and that there is no problem with living there.

### **What Is Wrong with a Painless Civilization?**

Readers may think, "Okay, I understand the essence of painless civilization, but what is wrong with it?" I believe there is a big problem with living in a painless civilization. I would like to shed light on one important aspect and try to clarify its essence.



A painless civilization is a civilization that encourages us to seek pleasure and comfort, eliminate pain and suffering, maintain a current framework that is beneficial to us, and control our lives so that they can proceed the way we planned beforehand. What is missing here is the possibility of rebirth after experiencing unpredicted, grave suffering. In our lives, we sometimes encounter unpredicted, grave suffering: we may lose a beloved family member, we may have severe disabilities from a traffic accident, our business may fail and leave us without money, or our children may commit a significant crime.

In such cases, we are thrown to the bottom of our lives. We think that our life is over and that there is no way out. We experience huge pain and scream in agony. However, sometimes a very strange thing occurs to us—after having gone through such pain, the psychological framework we have strongly maintained is dismantled, and a new framework, or a new view of life that has been unknown to us, appears in front of us. The place that we considered a hell becomes another good place in which to live. A huge reformation of our worldview occurs to us. We are reborn at the bottom of our life. We feel an unexpected sense of joy.

I have called this kind of unexpected joy that we feel after going through huge suffering the “joy of life.” This “joy of life” is indispensable to being able to lead an authentic and meaningful life. Because we are not robots that maintain the same framework throughout our lives, this kind of rebirth experience plays an extremely important role in our lives. Without the “joy of life,” many of us feel suffocated as if we were drowning in a sea of sugar, unable to escape from the framework of a painless civilization.

The central problem of a painless civilization is that it systematically erases the possibility of this “joy of life” from the lives of the people there.

However, we must pay special attention to the fact that there remains another desire within us that seeks to dismantle the “desire of the body.” I have called this the “desire of life.” The “desire of life” is a desire to dismantle our current framework and see a new world or a new framework that we have not imagined before. In a society moving toward a painless civilization, we are faced with a battle in our inner world between the “desire of the body” and the “desire of life.” This battle causes various types of pathology in a painless civilization, for example, self-injury. However, self-injury is not necessarily an illness to be healed. Instead, it is a form of hope, because self-injury is an act of courageous attack of the “desire of life” against the “desire of the body.”

What is needed is to guide the energy of the “desire of life” in another direction and to try to find ways of escaping from a painless civilization.

The “desire of life” is a key concept in the theory of painless civilization. True hope is breathing inside the “desire of life.” The interesting point is that the “desire of life” is actually a transformation of the “desire of the body.” Philosophically speaking, the “desire of life” is a desire that attempts to transcend the realm of the “desire of the body.” This is because the “desire of the body” has the desire to expand itself beyond its limits, and this leads to the attempt to transcend the desire of the body’s inclination to protect its own framework. Here, the “desire of the body” transforms into another desire, a desire to dismantle the “desire of the body,” which I call the “desire of life.” The “desire of life” is a desire that strongly supports the possibility of the “joy of life,” which is an indispensable element for us to be able to acquire the meaning of life in a society moving toward a painless civilization. In the relationship between the two desires, we can see an interesting dialectic of life. However, the “desire of life” is not an almighty counter-concept to the “desire of the body.” We need a more detailed analysis of our desires in contemporary civilization. (I have discussed the dialectic relationship between these two desires in Chapter Five of *Painless Civilization*.)<sup>5</sup>

The power of the “desire of the body” is very strong. The basis of our existence is made of this desire. Therefore, the battle against the “desire of the body” means a battle against oneself. In order to escape from a painless civilization, we have to fight against an intertwined system of preventive pain elimination, double-controlled structures, and pain elimination devices, which are deeply inscribed into current civilization. There is no easy way out.

There is no prescription for dismantling the negative side of a painless civilization. This is because if there were such a prescription, a painless civilization would jump on it, spreading the discourse on the prescription as an attractive commodity throughout society, and by doing so, a painless civilization would try to reduce the power of our act of dismantling. (This is similar to a situation in which, no matter how many books on environmental issues may be published, the actual environmental issues are not solved.) An argument

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5 The “desire of life” is different from the “joy of life.” In this paper, I do not discuss this point much further. Those who have interest are encouraged to read forthcoming translated chapters of *Painless Civilization*.

alone will not solve the problem of painless civilization. We must be careful lest our arguments be utilized by a painless civilization.

In a society moving toward a painless civilization, it is not those who do not have power or money who need to be aware of the problem of painless civilization. It is those who do have power and money that need such awareness. This is because those who have power and money are more deeply bound by their “desire of the body” than those who do not. They seek pleasure, comfort, painless situations, the maintenance of the current framework, and the maintenance of their preferable lives. These lives look gorgeous, but they have almost lost the possibility of experiencing the “joy of life,” which can only be granted when their stable framework is destroyed by encountering the Other or the advent of otherness.

I am frequently asked, “Why do we have to fight against a painless civilization? Isn’t it okay to lead a pleasurable and painless life?” My answer is that it might be okay for you to live such a life in the short term, but in the long term, it is likely that our society will become more and more painless, and it will become very hard for us to escape from the situation of “drowning in the sea of sugar.” What is needed is to broaden your imagination and think, from the bottom of your heart, what kind of society you would like to live in.

In this sense, the theory of painless civilization is an endeavor to think deeply about ourselves and try to remember what the meaning of life was when we were younger and more sensitive than today. What was the meaning of life when we were younger and less bound by our “desire of the body”? As an adult man who has lived long, I recognize that I have also been heavily bound by my own “desire of the body,” and in this regard, my life has had a significant problem. However, I am always saying to myself that I will never turn my eyes away from the fact that I am heavily bound by my “desire of the body.”

Of course, it is clear that just blaming myself in this way does not solve any problems arising from the “desire of the body” and painless civilization. The theory of painless civilization is a call for readers from me. I would like you to deeply reconsider your own life in a “civilized” society and think about what sort of life you wish to live, sharing hope with other people in this society. Sometimes I am asked why I am talking about people who are living pleasantly and comfortably, while many people are struggling with painful and miserable lives. Yes, it is true that there are many people who are in great suffering. However, what would these people wish for after escaping from their

painful lives? Would they not wish for a life full of comfort, pleasantness, less pain, and stability supported by modern technologies and medicine? This implies that the problem of painless civilization is a problem not only for rich and successful people, but potentially also for poor and suffering people. It is a problem for the entire human race.

### **Love in a Painless Civilization**

One thing that is destined to disappear in a painless civilization is the possibility of unconditional love. To love someone without placing any conditions on them has always been very hard to do, from ancient times to the present. A painless civilization seeks to completely erase the possibility of unconditional love from society. We can see one of the symptoms in today's reproductive medicine.

Let us imagine contemporary reproductive technologies, such as selective abortion and preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PDG). By using these technologies, we can select healthy, non-disabled embryos or fetuses to give birth to. This is a typical example of the previously discussed "preventive pain elimination." Most parents believe that the life of a child with a severe disability is unhappy and that raising such a child is a heavy burden to them. Indeed, almost all parents who discover a severe disability in their fetus choose abortion. As discussed in Section Three, this is a preventive or preemptive action that seeks to eliminate future pain before it actually emerges. A painless civilization is a civilization where various types of "preventive pain elimination," such as this, permeate every corner of society.

This creates a society in which a human being is only allowed to be born when they have met certain conditions that their parents have placed on them. People place conditions on their children, and when these children grow up, they find partners and place conditions on their own offspring. What is systematically lacking in such a society is the possibility of unconditional love: the love of fully accepting someone's existence, no matter how disabled, ugly, undesirable, unfavorable, or burdensome they might be. Such unconditionality constitutes the necessary foundation of human love. However, the love found in a painless civilization is radically different from what we imagine when we hear the word "love."

In *Painless Civilization 2*, I wrote the following:

To be loved is to be given the belief that your existence is affirmed by someone even if you do not meet certain criteria. The belief that my existence, simply being here, right now, in whatever state I may find myself, is being affirmed by someone else. To be given this kind of belief is to be loved.

This future society is one that systematically removes this kind of belief in love from the depths of every human heart. It is a society that minimizes suffering and burdens on the basis of the elimination of the possibility of love. It is a society in which everyone lives their everyday lives, forming human relationships and trying to preserve a stable way of life, while carrying deep within their hearts a vague unease: “It may be that I am not actually loved by anyone.” “It may be that I am not actually loved by anyone” is the fundamental feeling that lies submerged at the bottom of this society. (pp. 62–63)

The fundamental sense that people are forced to have in this society, which is deeply embedded in their minds, will be this: “The person existing here right now didn’t have to be this ‘me.’ Anyone else would have done just as well if they’d satisfied the conditions.” However, because living in a society that is moving toward a painless civilization is full of pleasure and comfort, people are apt to turn their eyes away from this fundamental problem and deceive themselves.

Love in a painless civilization is a type of love that protects our own pleasant frameworks and seeks to care about someone as long as our “love” does not destroy them. This is conditional love, but people in a painless civilization mistakenly believe that this kind of love is what they actually wish to receive from their partners. Because we are heavily brainwashed by the ways of thinking provided by painless civilization, simply singling out the problem of conditional love and seeking ways to overcome it do not lead to meaningful resolutions. What is needed are attempts to solve the problem of love in connection with the entire problem of the painless civilization, into which all of us are deeply incorporated. The problem of painless civilization lies not only in the infrastructure of society but also in our inner realities and the mindsets that we cling to in our daily lives. In *Painless Civilization 2*, I linked the concept of love to that of the “fundamental sense of security.” I wrote, “A fundamental sense of security is a social foundation upon which people can live their lives peacefully and meaningfully. It is something like trust or confidence in the world and a society that supports the existence of human beings” (p.65).

I believe that this concept should be one of the foundations of morality in the age of painless civilization.

The concept of my own death is another important subject in the theory of painless civilization because at a deep layer of our “desire of the body” there is a strong urge to attain immortality in this world or some other world. “I do not want to die” is one of the driving forces that develop a painless civilization. Therefore, overcoming painless civilization is to overcome our desire to live forever in this world, in the next world, or in heaven. This implies that we should seriously reconsider the worldview of religions that say that we will be able to acquire eternal life somewhere outside of this world. In this sense, the criticism of religions may be one of the main subject matters of the theory of painless civilization. The point is not that religions should be negated in our society, but that any religion, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism, can serve as a painless device to lure us into the realm of painless civilization. I would like religions to think deeply about their possible relationship to a painless civilization in contemporary society. Of course, it is true that religions have the potential to dismantle the movement toward a painless civilization. I would like to discuss this further with readers who are interested in the theory of painless civilization.

## Conclusion

There are a number of other topics that should be discussed from the perspective of the theory of painless civilization. The book *Painless Civilization* is currently being translated into English, chapter by chapter, so readers will be able to see the whole picture of my argument in the near future. I hope that you will join our discussion on the future of our civilization and the fate of the human race.

There have been many previous studies on the painlessness of modern civilization. Aldous Huxley’s book *Brave New World* (1932)<sup>6</sup> depicts a dystopian world in which people’s pleasure and pain are cleverly controlled by advanced scientific technologies. Ernst Jünger’s book *On Pain*<sup>7</sup> discusses the philosophical meaning of pain and its relation to modern technology and war. In his book *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (1964), Erich Fromm<sup>8</sup>

6 Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Vintage Books, 1932.

7 Ernst Jünger, *On Pain (Über den Schmerz)*, Telos Press Publishing, 1934.

8 Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil*, Lantern Books, 1964.

discusses the fate of humans in modern society, who are deprived of the energy of life and mesmerized by necrophilia. Karl Marx's *Capital (Das Kapital)*, 1867) is considered to be one of the first studies to deal with the incessant movement of painless civilization. Japanese philosopher Shozo Fujita's book *Totalitarianism Toward 'Comfort'* (1995)<sup>9</sup> gives an interesting discussion of pleasure, pain, and joy, which was a precursor of my theory of painless civilization. Leon Kass et al.'s book *Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness* (2003)<sup>10</sup> deals with a painless civilization appearing in the medical world. Byung-Chul Han's book *The Palliative Society: Pain Today*<sup>11</sup> which was published after the publication of my *Painless Civilization*, discusses the same subject from a post-modern perspective. Although it was published in 2003, my book *Painless Civilization* remains unfinished. I am now trying to write a long, final chapter (Chapter Nine) in Japanese and complete my argument on painless civilization.

Although there is no easy answer to the problem of painless civilization, we must tackle it from various angles and try to find ways of escaping from the painless stream swirling through society. Recall the five aspects of the desire of the body: seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, maintaining the current state of affairs and planning for stability, expanding and increasing itself if there is an opening, sacrificing other people, and controlling (human) lives, (biological) life, and nature. These five aspects of the "desire of the body," which have been propelling the progress of painless civilization, are all incorporated deep inside each of us living in a society moving toward painlessness.

What I want to stress is that, in order to envision a better future for our civilization, we must seriously reexamine our understanding of the meaning of life and the meaning of having been born. A philosophical re-examination of ourselves is what is truly required now.

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9 Fujita Shozo, "Totalitarianism Toward 'Comfort'", 1995.

10 Leon Kass, Elizabeth H. Blackburn, Rebecca S. Dresser, Daniel W. Foster, Francis Fukuyama, et al., *Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness*, Dana Press, 2003.

11 Byung-Chul Han, "The Palliative Society: Pain Today, (*Palliativgesellschaft: Schmerz heute*)", *Polity*, 2020.



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