

OUR SOCIETY ITSELF IS NOW STRESSFUL

Satoru (84) from Western Tokyo (Japan), divorced, lives alone in a low-cost home for the elderly

IN SHORT SUPPLY

When the COVID crisis began, we couldn't go shopping or anywhere. And everything was in short supply, so I couldn't find anything I wanted. Since I have my own PC, I often shop online. But in the beginning of the COVID crisis, I couldn't find any items online either. That was quite inconvenient. Things are getting much better now, but it was terrible from March to early May. Although I had some masks back then, stores ran out of the products and I couldn't buy any. I also searched for goggle manufacturers to buy items to protect my eyes, but nothing was available. That was tough.

NEW PRIME MINISTER

I use my PC mainly for shopping. I have a desktop PC with a quite big screen. Since the beginning of the COVID crisis, I've been concerned about what's going on. So I've started searching for information from the sources I trust and learned that we are now facing huge challenges, particularly in Japan. We now have a new prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, replacing Shinzo Abe. I'm a little worried about how well Suga can handle the situation. It's not clear at this point.

UNRELIABLE MEDIA

What I'm more anxious about is how unreliable Japanese media information is now. Some powerful groups seem to be putting pressure on media, so people cannot say what they like to say. So I can't trust the information I see. In that sense, we are in trouble. Also in the U.S., they're having a presidential election on November 3, right? Trump or Biden. Its result will also affect Japan, and I'm concerned about that.

NOT TOO CLOSE

My relationships with family members haven't changed much. Well, we haven't been close anyway. We talk over the phone once in a while, when we need to, and that is fine with me. With my friends, I talk over the phone occasionally. Since the restrictions have been gradually lifted, residents of this facility can also go out a little more easily now. But we still

need to let staff members know where we're going before leaving the building. In that sense, I'm not too worried.

STAYING HEALTHY

I'm a health-conscious person, so I've been doing many things to stay healthy. The first thing is food. But since I have a meal plan here, I can't choose what I eat. Other things include moderate physical activities, good sleep, and not feeling stressed. Well, as long as I live here, stress is part of my life. Our society itself is now stressful. But anyway, I watch my health. I have a few health conditions, but they don't affect my everyday life, so I'm doing fine. I go to an eye doctor every 6 months to get eye drops for cataracts. Other than that, I don't go to doctors on a regular basis.

*Satoru was interviewed on 24 September 2020. His story was shared with us by **International Longevity Center (ILC) Japan** – 国際長寿センター, member of the ILC Global Alliance, an international federation researching and advocating the vitality and the societal and economical position of older people. In the Netherlands, the ILC network is represented by Leyden Academy.*