

We talked with the citizens of this town.

Theme: What the Construction Industry and Super General Contractors Should Be Like to Win the Trust of Future Generations and What Is Required of Taisei Corporation

Taisei Corporation, which is striving to become an even more trusted company, is always willing to listen to what its stakeholders have to say. This time we have set up an opportunity to talk with citizens with an interest in civil engineering and building construction.

> Outline

Date: March 24, 2008

Venue: Conference Room in the head office of Taisei Corporation

Participants (citizens):

Mr. Kenichi Kojima, photographer, writer, leader of Let's Go on Social Studies Field Trips

Mr. Hidenori Shibao, game creator, writer

Mr. Yuji Kaida, Illustrator

Ms. Aya Kaida, Novelist

Ms. Atsuko Tamura, office worker

Mr. Shinichi Oki, freelance engineer

* Titles omitted below.

Participants (Taisei Corporation):

General Affairs Section Manager, General Affairs Department, Business Administration Division

Document Section Manager, Legal Department, Business Administration Division

Deputy Safety Planning Section Manager, Safety Department, Safety Administration & Environment Division

Global Environment Section Manager,

Environmental Management Department, Safety Administration & Environment Division

Information Technology Section Manager, Technological Planning Department, Technology Center

Deputy Planning Director, Construction Department, Construction Division

GL, Project Management Group, Design Division

Planning Section Manager, Civil Engineering Division

The following are the opinions exchanged:

● Construction site tours are very moving experiences.

Taisei: This year, we are planning to have Dialogues with three different types of stakeholders. We are here today for one of them, the Dialogue with Citizens. We hope that you will be frank with us about what you expect from super general contractors and Taisei Corporation, so that we can incorporate your views into our future management practices wherever possible.

Kojima: My interest in civil engineering started in 2004, when I participated in the Tokyo Geo-Site Project, an event aimed at showing actual civil engineering sites to the general public. That event taught me that an unbelievable structure was being built

beneath the everyday streetscapes in Toranomon. I was moved to see the underground public utility conduit supporting Tokyo. This has led me to found a group for social studies field trips.

Shibao: It was an event named Tokyo TUNNELIX PROJECT that led me to become fascinated with this field. The event brought me on a journey into the underground of Yamate Dori Avenue. It was a very exciting experience. Since then, I have participated in many different site tours and learned a lot of things.

Kaida: When I participated in the Tokyo Geo-Site Project, I saw a construction site situated in the middle of a cluster of high-rise



blocks and discovered a totally different world spreading underground. It felt like exploring the depths of the earth and excited me very much. Looking at these sites has inspired me to start to look at this world with renewed curiosity.

Since I would often play in construction sites as a child, construction companies were not unfamiliar to me. Nevertheless, I had begun to have negative feelings about them as they were increasingly seen as environmental destroyers. However, I have recently started to participate in many social studies tours and this has reminded me how much civil engineering and construction work do to support our lives. Although there is much bad news about the civil engineering industry, my opinion is that people should see things in their entirety to make sound judgments about them, rather than criticizing specific aspects.

Kaida (Aya): I listened to the tour guide telling us about the construction sites and thought, "How amazing that this is all being created by people!" I think I thought that because I was able to see the individuals involved. Back on the ground, I saw the streets in Hibiya and thought, "These are all products of human creation too." Thinking this way made me feel very happy and want to see more.

In today's society, many things are packaged and hidden from our view; they are like black boxes. Although Japanese society enjoys good educational standards and high living standards after the period of rapid economic growth, it seems to show a general lack of trust toward technologies. However, looking at the faces of individual construction workers convinces you that "they are all right." So I would like construction companies to disclose more information about their construction sites, for example by uploading videos to free video sharing websites, so that we can feel safer about buildings.

Tamura: Many of my colleagues have children and many of them are interested in taking their children to look at construction sites, as they know that their children are not given opportunities to see processes, but only completed forms. I suppose that knowing the processes makes a big difference in the way you look at things.

Oki: You cannot see how construction work is done in a construction site unless you visit the site while the work is being done. One interesting thing about construction sites is that they change every time you visit them.

● We want more REALITY.

Taisei: We understand that you all like civil engineering. But we would like you to point out negative aspects of it too.

Kaida (Aya): I think that you should stop using fictional, conceptual photographs in posters that you put up at construction sites, in stations, and other places, as actual construction sites are much cooler. If you want to emphasize good environments, you should focus on your technologies. I guess something more realistic is better. Actually, I have seen some local residents who had objected to construction become convinced and change their minds after going to see the construction site with their own eyes and receive an explanation.

Kaida: Today, images no longer have the power to impress people. People today want something more realistic. If you rely on images, they may feel you are trying to deceive them.

Taisei: It is true that some construction processes involve actual earth-moving hard work. Although we put a lot of effort and money into our construction processes, completed structures do not show that. Perhaps, it will be good if we can do something to get neighbors to understand this.

Taisei: All construction site managers have great enthusiasm towards their work. If they explain their work to people at their construction sites, they are sure to win understanding from the people. However, it is not easy for the entire industry to explain its work to the general public. Perhaps the industry fails to effectively communicate to people.

Kaida: I understand that it is not easy for construction companies to communicate what kinds of people are working for them and what thoughts they have when people only see them collectively as corporations. Although it may be important to work to let more people know about your social contributions and environmental commitments, I believe that you should disclose everything as it is, rather than emphasizing good aspects. As new technologies are often obtained from failures, I would rather that you provide information on failures as well.

Kojima: Today's construction sites are normally very closed environments. I guess that windows and other openings can enhance transparency and increase public trust.

● Evaluate civil engineering from the perspective of investments for posterity.

Taisei: As public construction works have been increasingly criticized in recent years, it is often difficult to promote the development and improvement of infrastructures. In fact, it is often discussed whether this is really reasonable.

Kaida (Aya): I guess sufficient thought is not given to the fact that once completed those infrastructures can be used for 50 years or even for 100 years and thus they can be seen as investments for posterity.

Taisei: That may be partly because of the social climate of the times; many people today just cannot afford to look at things in the long run and think only of the present. However, we are hoping that more of our clients begin to see 50 years and 100 years ahead. To this end, we are also hoping that there will be more people like you supporting such far-sighted views.

● Cities are becoming less and less distinct from one another.

Taisei: The construction industry not only provides civil engineering services, which develop infrastructures, but also carries out the commercial construction of buildings, such as apartments and other buildings that are growing in demand due to urban redevelopment. What do you think of such large-scale commercial redevelopment projects?

Kaida: Although I understand that we cannot stop the growth of cities altogether, it would be a pity if all the old things were done away with. I think that due consideration should be given to protecting traditional things. Even if they absolutely have to be demolished, they should be left on record at least.

Shibao: One of my concerns is that urban redevelopment is resulting in cities becoming less and less distinctive from one another. It

disgusts me how similar all the provincial cities are now, although that is also true for Tokyo.

Kaida (Aya): I went to see the construction site of the Ohashi Junction of the Tokyo Metropolitan Expressway. What is interesting about this redevelopment project is that it incorporates the resettling of dislocated local people. That is, the local community that existed there was intended to be preserved from the start, although some changes will be made to it. What used to be a densely-settled urban residential area is going to be turned into a good, new neighborhood with a large park, where the original residents can restore their local community. I think this is an interesting project.

Taisei: We need to think creatively to construct new buildings while preserving history, like the Dojunkai apartment blocks in Harajuku.

● Increase the number of civil engineering fans to sweep away negative images.

Taisei: It is very encouraging to hear you say that you want us to provide opportunities to meet our construction workers in person and see our processes and technologies for yourselves. While construction companies are making major, if invisible, contributions to society, many people have negative images of us like bid rigging. If you have any advice on how we can get rid of such negative images, please let us know.

Shibao: I think that the best way is to increase the number of people who like civil engineering, in other words, attract more positive elements by increasing civil engineering fans. This requires you to start by increasing the number of people with civil engineering literacy. How about providing seminars, maybe online seminars?

Taisei: Attracting fans is a great idea. The remark that you made about how much you enjoy visiting construction sites was also very striking. Using videos is a very good idea too.

Taisei: This Dialogue has brought me to the realization that we need to develop an appropriate mindset. Namely, a mindset that enables technologies. I think that mindset is an important factor that can connect the visible and the invisible.

Taisei: Thank you very much for sharing with us many different helpful ideas today. I hope that we can continue to communicate with stakeholders by building personal relationships in this way.

