

## **Nine years since the Great East Japan Earthquake (this section has been quoted from President Komaba's message.)**

Nine years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake became the reason for starting this report.

According to figures released by the Reconstruction Agency, the total number of victims exceeds 22,200 when combined with the people who died of quake-related causes, such as a worsening of injuries sustained. The number of evacuees now stands at 47,737 (as of February 10th), a reduction of approximately 4,000 since last year. New towns now line the coastal areas that received massive damage from the tsunami, and recovery work involving the construction of sea levees and roads is progressing.

The government has revised the mid-term roadmap work itinerary for decommissioning the No.1 Reactor at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, but work has started on removing the spent fuel from the storage pools in the No.1 and No.2 reactors and it has become clear just how difficult it will be to establish measures for coping with radioactivity, so the goal for completion has been delayed by five years from 2023.

The removal of molten fuel debris, which is the most pressing problem, is targeted to start from the No.2 reactor in 2021, but the extreme difficulty of carrying out surveys on the No.1 and No.3 reactors owing to the radioactivity being too powerful for robots alone means that there is no plan available for removing the debris from these reactors. The government is maintaining its goal for decommissioning the reactors between 30 and 40 years after the accident, but it is thought that reality will derail this target drastically.

And, changing the subject, several rainbows appeared in the sky over Tohoku on March 11th. I'm sure that many people raising their eyes to the sky during this were overcome with their own individual thoughts.

- Is it a coincidence? No, I'm sure it is a sign from the souls of the victims.

- The souls of the victims have come back to visit it... I can't stop crying...

- It just like the souls in heaven have returned to comfort us.

The scars left by the earthquake are just too enormous. I pray that the souls of the victims are able to rest in peace.



## **Automotive area (AISIN SEIKI to commercialize ILY-Ai motorized mobility)**

AISIN SEIKI Co., Ltd. will commercialize ILY-Ai motorized mobility. In the first stage of this, Colorful Town Gifu (operated by Toyota Automall Development Corporation), shopping center in Gifu City, has been leasing them out for a fee. ILY-AI provides personal mobility specialized for commercial facilities. AISIN SEIKI has been moving ahead with development and evaluations ever since it announced the first model in 2015.

Colorful Town Gifu has been lending out ILY-Ai to shoppers as part of a verification experiment being carried out since July 2019, and an average of around thirty people use them per day on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition to allowing people to ride them while moving about (capacity of one adult and one child), they can also be used as shopping carts. The ILY-Ai developed specially for use at Colorful Town Gifu run at a maximum speed of 4kph in alignment with normal walking speed, and safety and convenience has been taken into consideration by making them around the same size as normal shopping carts.

Commercialization will ensure that users' and suppliers' requirements and opinions will be taken into consideration to improve safety and convenience. Colorful Town Gifu will allow shoppers to use ILY-Ai free of charge in the future by registering as members in advance.

AISIN SEIKI is making progress with initiatives for a wide range of commercial facilities throughout the entire country to adopt this system in the future.



Source: Nikkei XTECH

### **Keihin Seimitsu Kogyo (Effects of the Novel Coronavirus)**

In alignment with the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, the shutdown of Japan's automobile manufacturers in order to halt expansion and minimize the sudden drop in vehicle demand is spreading to overseas plants and plants in Japan.

The shutdown of operations in European, North America, South America, Asian and Indian plants for nearly all of Japan's automobile manufacturers for around one or two weeks has been fixed, starting in Europe on March 16th. Domestic factories are also feeling the crunch caused by a global drop in demand for new vehicles, and a certain company has announced the shutdown of a total of seven production lines in five plants throughout the group from April 3rd for a period of between two and nine days (operation days).

At a press conference on the 19th, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association also said that it will delay the announcement of the domestic demand forecast for four-wheeled vehicles and the forecast for the following fiscal year, which is usually announced in March, due to it being impossible to predict the degree at which the coronavirus will affect the industry. In addition to suggesting that the effects will be greater for the next period than the current period, the chairman of the Manufacturers Association also said that it is impossible to make a prediction now and that he is praying that the effects on the automotive industry will not last long.

The various measures that KSK have adopted include ordering employees with morning temperatures of 37.5 degrees Celsius or higher to stay at home, promoting hand-washing, gargling and sanitizing with alcohol, two face masks per day are distributed to all employees and they are obligated to wear them, employees are forbidden to visit customers or other branches (the use of public transport will also be banned as a basic principle from April), staggered working hours for employees who commute by train, the fine management of people with fevers in all branches, and 14-day self-isolation at home for people returning from overseas.

### Post-editorial Notes: (Teleworking)

Because the author visited an overseas country, he worked from home (teleworking) between February 24th (Monday) and March 6th (Friday).

I usually get up at 05:30 and leave home at 05:50 after a hurried breakfast, but on the first day of telework I rose at 07:00, partook in a leisurely breakfast, took my temperature and booted up my PC to begin work at 07:50.

Once I started, I became so preoccupied with my work that I forget that I was at home (I may have overstated that...)

The advantages I noted over the course of these two weeks were that I didn't lose in excess of three hours per day commuting, that I could use the time as a pleased (lunch, etc.), and that I felt absolutely no difference in contacting people in our plants, etc., via telephone and email than normal. The main disadvantages I noticed was that the speed at which I could perform routine work slowed down owing to it being difficult to get hold of the data I needed when I needed it, and because it was not possible to engage in face-to-face communications, etc.

Despite this... I got the feeling that I was able to fully respond to all creative work requirements. As I move toward the final chapter of my life, I was hoping that staying at home would turn me into a useful guy instead of just a nuisance, and, although I worked hard at achieving this, the extra work I caused the God of Thunder by her having to go out and buy more food, etc., sort of left me sensing an electrical pressure that resulted in a rather negative sensation.

As the final day ended, I left the house for a brief stroll and a bout of drinking. A few drinks as an aperitif at around 7pm on a weekday seemed to soak right into my stomach and made it easy to feel tipsy.

As I was scheduled to return to work the following day, I took a stroll along the coast. It was the first time I had been outside for some time, and the beauty of the ocean blew away the stress that had built up while being confined to my home, and I felt my tension rising. Praying that the spread of the novel coronavirus would soon die down and the world would return to normal, I wandered back to my home.

