

From Soei to Our Clients around the World

Yoshiki HASEGAWA, President

On Friday, March 11, 2011, we at Soei experienced one of the greatest earthquakes that has ever happened. Part of the glass partitions broke in the Tokyo office of Soei which was the only damage we suffered. But, sadly, our country has suffered a major disaster that has left some 28,000 people missing or dead.

Japan's Triple Disaster

The earthquake had a magnitude of 9.0 and the ground shook for nearly six minutes. A giant tsunami with a maximum wave height of 30 meters engulfed many cities, towns and villages along the Pacific Coast of north-eastern Japan, destroying them, and causing two-meter-high tsunamis in Hawaii and San Francisco. This tsunami also damaged the nuclear power plant in Fukushima resulting in a serious crisis now rated at INES Level 7, the same as Chernobyl.

The triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident has affected the entire country. There were food and gas shortages mainly in north-eastern Japan as well as blackouts in many areas due to lack of electricity. Radioactive materials leaked from the Fukushima nuclear power plant have been detected in various areas and there is a growing anxiety over health. Many people around the world cancelled their business trips or holidays in Japan and many foreign residents have left. A great number of Japanese people are feeling anxious wondering what will happen to the country.

Signs of Revival from the Triple Disaster

In April, three weeks after the earthquake, the affected areas started moving towards reconstruction. Kesenuma City in Miyagi Prefecture, which was renowned for its beautiful scenery and vast fishery resources, for example, is now known to the world as a city washed away by a huge tsunami and devastated by fire from the extensive video footage of the disaster. It was a tragedy. But despite all that has happened, over 97% of Kesenuma's inhabitants survived. With the warm support of countries from all over the world, the people of Kesenuma are now taking steps towards creating new industries and rebuilding their city.

The uncontrolled release of radioactive materials into the air from Fukushima nuclear plant ended about a week after the quake. Even though it was a serious nuclear accident accompanied by a hydrogen explosion, the heroes who have worked tirelessly at Fukushima have made it possible to keep the release of radioactive materials into the air down to a level which was a fraction of Chernobyl. Every effort is being made to ensure that these people are working under the safest conditions possible.

In order to halt the leakage of radioactive materials into the sea, enormous tanks have been provided. Operations have also started to clean the contaminated water using zeolite which absorbs radioactive materials contained in the water.

Tokyo is Safe

Because it is owned by Tokyo Electric Power Company, people assume that the Fukushima nuclear power plant is fairly close to Tokyo, but in actual fact it is some 220 km away, which is more than double the distance between Chernobyl and Kiev. Insufficient disclosure of information by the Japanese authorities, as well as sensational coverage by some media, has resulted in confusion over the radiation danger in Tokyo, but we assure you that Soei's headquarters are safe.

On Thursday, April 14, I visited the Buddhist temple Senso-ji and despite being a weekday, it was full of people (Photo 1). In the temple grounds, a couple of Americans were having fun with the traditional Japanese paper fortunes, joking and laughing together (Photo 2).



(Photo 1)



(Photo 2)

Japan Will Recover

In March, there were a number of power cuts in areas around Tokyo but since April efforts to save energy are becoming widespread and there have been no more blackouts. With the shortage of food and gas being solved and professional football and baseball games having resumed, Tokyo has mostly returned to its pre-quake condition.

Japan is experiencing terrible hardships but I have no doubt that we will overcome the present difficulties and not only recover but continue to foster technological and economic growth. We at Soei will also work hard to make that come true.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for all the kind words and support that we have received from clients and associates around the world.

Welcome to Kyoto!

Yu NOMA, Manager of Kyoto Office

Soei has a branch office in Kyoto, which we call the Kyoto Office. Kyoto is situated in western Japan and because of the distance it suffered no damage from the recent Great East Japan Earthquake. As of April, 2011, Soei has 10 people in the Kyoto Office with patent specialists in electricity, electronic control, machinery, biology, pharmaceuticals, chemistry, etc., and one design specialist.

One of Soei's strengths is its "partnership and cooperation." In the Kyoto Office, the members with expert knowledge collaborate with each other to provide better service to our clients. Furthermore, the Kyoto Office is connected to the Tokyo Office via an advanced network system enabling close cooperation between the two offices.



(Photo 3*)

Japan is still feeling the aftershocks and those of us living in western Japan are also anxious about the vulnerable condition of the affected areas. However, we believe that our role is to raise our spirits and work hard to protect our clients' valued intellectual property rights in order to strengthen their business. To this end, all of us at the Kyoto Office are exercising our ability to collaborate, cooperate and work with passion.

Please come and visit us at the Kyoto Office when you are in Japan. You will be welcomed by our beautiful historic city, wonderful natural surroundings, delicious food, and the friendly staff of the Kyoto Office!



(Photo 4*)

*Kyoto has many famous sights for cherry blossoms; Photo 3 is taken at Chion-in, and Photo 4 is taken at Biwako-sosui canal