

Thank you all for everything this year (this section has been quoted from President Komaba's message.)

The year 2020 saw the start of the novel coronavirus, and it has now come to an end.

This virus was first detected in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, in

December 2019, and as of December 22nd, 2020, a total of 201,762 people have been infected in Japan with 2,978 fatalities, and 77,307,971 people have been infected worldwide with 1,701,085 fatalities.

There have been many horror stories, such as Europe repeatedly enacting lockdowns and enforcing stay-at-home restrictions, America seeing widespread contagion after its leaders failed to grasp the significance of the pandemic, and Japan experiencing trouble in discovering a way to fight COVID-19, etc., but there have also been certain success stories in handling contagion in certain parts of Asia (Taiwan, Thailand and others).

In the world of politics, America went through an extremely arduous presidential election that split the country into two. I hope that president-elect, Joe Biden, can breathe new life into the world, if only on a small scale. Europe is now facing the final stage of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, which still appears to be bogged down with difficulties. Japan elected a new prime minister, although ultimately it is difficult to believe that this will result in the enactment of effective policies, making the future difficult to predict.

From an economic perspective, the spread of the coronavirus has delivered a severe hit on a wide range of industries centered around BEACH industries (B = Travel industry, E = Entertainment industry, A = Airline industry, C = Cruise industry, H = Hotel industry). Although it is impossible to compare this year to last year, advanced and advancing nations remain unable to restore their economies while they frantically struggle to find measures for controlling COVID-19.

KSK has adopted various measures for combatting the coronavirus, and despite the fact that we have been forced to face three surges in infections since February, the company continues to record zero infections. We have also revised our organizational policies in anticipation of the future, reformed our proposal system and small-group Kaizen activities, and have begun to prepare for the adoption of metal 3D printers and start-up activities, and we are also quietly moving ahead with putting our technology to practical use in air-filtration functions as part of the tasks we are capable of performing to ensure SDGs, etc.

We will also continue to do everything within our power to come together in harmonious cooperation in order to create a company that contributes to industry.

And finally, I would also like to thank everybody for the efforts they put in during 2020. I appreciate it from the bottom of my heart.

I look forward to your continued support and cooperation in 2021.

Automotive area (Three major convenience store operators, Toyota and Hino seek verification for the adoption of fuel-cell compact trucks)

Five companies consisting of Seven-Eleven Japan, Family Mart, Lawson, Toyota Motors and Hino Motors announced the start of initiatives aimed at adopting fuel-cell compact trucks (FC company trucks) on December 8th. In addition to aligning their sights on adopting FC compact trucks in order to ensure a sustainable society capable of supporting diversity, etc., these five companies have agreed to enact initiatives to create an environment that facilitates widespread distribution in the future. In further detail, the three convenience store operators were considering adopting the FC compact trucks (maximum load of 3 tons) jointly developed by Toyota Motors and Hino Motors, and they have now decided to commence road verification tests in 2021 to verify usability and convenience. Once the results of the road verification tests have been evaluated, the three companies will consider whether or not the FC company trucks can be put to practical use by multiple distribution centers and for deliveries between stores from a business and social standpoint in 2022.

In order to cope with future widespread distribution, efforts to isolate all issues will be continued from 2022, such as establishing more hydrogen stations in alignment with actual market use, the convenience of hydrogen supply, refilling capacities and opening hours, etc., as well as vehicle purchases and the cost of hydrogen. At the same time, the central government, autonomous local authorities and hydrogen station operators, etc., will collaborate to provide suggestions for improvements with regard to these issues, and investigations will move ahead into the support and collaborative organizations, etc., required to create effective systems that promote reductions in CO2 emissions caused by the large-scale adoption of FC trucks in the future.

The FC compact trucks developed by Toyota Motors and Hino Motors will target a traveling distance of around 400km, and they are aiming at satisfying the needs for environmental performance and transportation efficiency as commercial vehicles at high levels. With regard to expanded demand for hydrogen, although the trucks consume more hydrogen in comparison to FC vehicles, expectations are high for the adoption of commercial FC trucks, buses and other vehicles that can be operated in accordance with plans that take traveling distance and hydrogen refills into account during general usage. The issues that remain unsolved in order to achieve full-scale distribution include reducing the cost of the vehicles and the cost of hydrogen, as well as improving the levels of convenience offered by hydrogen stations.

The five companies involved have established ties with the central government, autonomous local authorities and hydrogen station operators, etc., with regard to these initiatives, with investigations into various measures to improve and solve these issues through the operation of FC compact trucks in distribution situations moving ahead, and the creation of an environment that supports the widespread use of not only compact trucks but also commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles and other FC vehicles is currently being promoted.



Source: Kankyo Business Online

Keihin Seimitsu Kogyo (2020 Kaizen Convention awards ceremony)

This year's 2020 KSK Kaizen Convention, due to have been held in July, was cancelled owing to the spread of the novel coronavirus, and instead we held the presentations, screenings, selection of the best team and award ceremony in August via video in accordance with the itinerary shown below to commemorate the hard work the selected teams had put in over the course of the year.

- Filming of videos for the circles giving presentations: Mid-August through to September 18th
- Screening by the president, the managing director, advisors, the general manager and department directors: September 22nd through to October 5th
- Winning circles decided: October 12th
- Award ceremony: October 21st (at the head office for the top three winners, and at each regional office for the other teams)

The videos were filmed under time restrictions at each office, but despite this, each circle made splendid efforts and the presentations were as good as we always enjoy.

The results ensured that the first prize was awarded to the Casting Section, Hokkaido Plant (Improving the Working Environment from a Female Perspective), the second prize to Manufacturing Section No.1, Kanuma Plant (Improving Handling of Heavy Objects), and the third prize to Manufacturing Section No.3, Hokkaido Plant (Achieving Zero Residual Shavings).

The 2020 Kaizen activities were carried out by small groups in order to place the priority on preventing the spread of infection amid the COVID-19 crisis, and we look forward to expanding the success we achieved in this by evolving KSK Small-Group Kaizen after the pandemic has died down so that we can show you the regular KSK Kaizen Convention.

Post-editorial Notes: (A moment amid COVID-19: when we meet in dreams)

We humans follow customs that help familiarize us to various environments, and even during the current infuriating coronavirus crisis, we are learning to adapt to a new environment. I became aware of this due to two different matters.

Before we came under attack by COVID-19, the author used to love breaking a sweat at the gym on weekends and following this up with a daytime drink. It is difficult to find anything to beat the taste of a good hamburger or salt-grilled mackerel when you are hungry or the sense of happiness generated as an ice-cold beer quenches a powerful thirst, and then visiting a bookstore or sitting on a park bench with a red face following this guaranteed an extremely relaxing day.

Unable to follow this routine since February, I instead go jogging along the coastline to refresh my soul by the Pacific Ocean in the afternoon sunshine, and then drink a beer on my deck while gazing at the distant Enoshima Island after returning home, and this is now my favorite routine.

As Yumi Matsutoya once sung in one of her old songs, "Someday time will be a generous friend who will turn the past yesterday into a story," I get the feeling that in a few years when COVID-19 has disappeared from our lives, we will feel somewhat nostalgic about the period we are currently going through.

Incidentally, I'm not sure if it is an effect of the current period or not, but the number of opportunities I get to meet up with some of the girls from the past when I loved them relentlessly, even if sometimes it was a one-way street, have increased (in my dreams). This is favorable development, and I now look forward to going to sleep every night.

They appear to me exactly as they were at that time. And I, who was new to parenting then, still had my pure heart... I remember their cute faces in blushing pink as they chatted cheerfully with me... They were in their low teens and embodied pure health at that time, and as they drew close to me, I noticed the sweet fragrance of their breath... and then... Ahhh...

Why is it that dreams like that stop suddenly midday and move onto a different scene? It's crazy!

Suddenly, I found myself back in my own student days dancing frantically with a girl I really liked at that time at a dance club (well, she was rather gorgeous!)

The lights then dimmed and a slow song came on, and the couples around us moved into close embraces and began to sway slowly to the music.

Here was my chance! A cheek dance! And, just as I placed my hands on her hips, I woke up... The dream... It was fading... The moment I tried to do something naughty (although it felt pretty good to me), the scene suddenly changed.

A long time ago, the late Eiichi Ohtaki wrote a song that I liked entitled *When We Meet in Dreams*, and although it never occurred to me that the lyrics may have been slightly improper (or maybe it did on a lower level...), these lyrics slowly emerged from my memory.

Wouldn't it be beautiful if I met you in my dreams, so until we meet up, I will remain asleep → I began to hear a different voice...

It sounded like my late father was saying, "Stop being stupid and go and reflect on your sins in hell!"

