

October 27, 2015

**Opening Address
of the Reception to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary
of the Building Center of Japan**

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President
The Building Center of Japan

I would like to thank you all for joining us for this commemorative reception of the 50th anniversary of the Building Center of Japan.

On August 7th of 2015, we, BCJ, celebrated our 50th anniversary, thanks to the considerable support given by many people and related organizations. Taking this opportunity, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the support and guidance provided to us by you all. Thank you very much.

Also, we would like to acknowledge the contributions made by all of the successive BCJ Presidents; the first, Mr. Ito, followed by Messrs. Hieda, Sawada, Kunigo and Tateishi as well as all of the fine efforts made by all managers and staff members who have served BCJ throughout our history.

Looking back over the last 50 years, the year 1965, when BCJ was founded, was the starting point of the era of dramatic development of the Japanese building sector. That was 20 years after the war ended. It was the dawn of the so called “Super High-rise Buildings” in Japan. At that time, there was a dynamic plan to establish a public corporation, called “The Building Center of Japan”, whose mission was to collect, disseminate, and publicize comprehensive building-information, including that of building theory, technology, materials and equipment, both within and outside of Japan.

However, that challenging plan was not realized, due to a limited national budget at the time, but instead, BCJ Co. Ltd. (currently, the Building & Housing Center of Japan Co. Ltd.) was founded in 1964, financed by the private sector, with the objective of facilitating the modernization of the Japanese building industry. In the following year, 1965, the current incorporated foundation, BCJ, was established by a contribution by BCJ Co. Ltd., as an organization to promote R&D, and the evaluation and the dissemination of building technologies.

Since then, BCJ has been actively working as a comprehensive center for the technological development of buildings, to facilitate the practical use of new building-technologies and materials, such as dome buildings, seismic isolation structures, and pre-fabricated housing systems, through our mission of evaluating all of these innovative technologies. At the same time, in order to meet the needs of the times, we have devoted ourselves to various other activities in the field of building and housing, such as research, publishing, organizing seminars, ISO certification and international cooperation and information exchanges. We are proud of what we have achieved in our history, which may have contributed, in some way, to the improvement of building technology as well as of the lives of the Japanese people.

From the period that BCJ operated its office in Harumi (1965-1981) through the time of operations in Toranomom (1981-2007), we made steady progress as a comprehensive building center, and the sole building center, in line with the growth of the Japanese building industry.

Later on, however, the building industry and administrative system went through drastic changes, which were brought about by social and economic reforms in Japan, such as the privatization of some building control systems, building confirmation and inspections, and technical evaluation services. In 1999, in order to adapt to these changes, BCJ began building confirmation and inspection, and performance evaluation services, and after that, we started a structural calculation review service. Through these experiences, BCJ revised itself into an organization that specializes in technical assessment and evaluation of buildings. In the course of privatization of building control services, many other private organizations started these building confirmation and technical evaluation services as their business bases, which caused severe competition in this field.

This was actually a big challenge; one that we had never experienced before. One of the typical examples was a technical appraisal service under the building code. Before the revision, BCJ had exclusive rights to conduct the technical appraisals that were required by Article 38 of the Building Standard Law of Japan, but under the new system, many other organizations became eligible to do the same.

BCJ's legal status had completely changed, from "only one body" to "one of the bodies". In other words, we were competing for clients in a competitive market. This is quite natural for most of the people and companies, but for us, BCJ, who had long served within the public sector, it necessitated huge adjustments. As the new competitors became more and more active and experienced, we were driven into a tight corner. Furthermore, the Japanese

building economy had been very slowed at that time being affected by the fall of Lehman Brothers, which made the situation even more serious.

To overcome these difficulties, we worked very hard to expand our new business and to establish a customer-oriented management system. We worked for the improvement of customer service and for the better of an evaluation of BCJ's services, and at the same time, rationalization of overall BCJ operations, including cost reductions in various fields. During that period, we have changed our organizational status to "General Incorporated Foundation" (for-profit business). In reward for such efforts, and thanks to the government economic measure known as "Abenomics", the effects and the recent construction boom brought on in preparation for the Tokyo Olympic games, we now think that we will be managed to survive.

We are now facing the national problem of population decline, which will cause a considerable scale-down of the construction industry in the long view and a market shift from extensive new building construction to the extended use of existing buildings. Also, energy conservation is becoming an increasingly important issue in the building sector. Under these circumstances, we are now making strong efforts in finding a new direction to proceed, in line with the current needs in the industry, and for consumers as well.

Lastly, we are entering the second-half of a century of our organization in an era of such drastic economic changes, which causes us to brace ourselves. Since its foundation, BCJ has built up much value as a most reliable and highly respected organization, which conducts impartial third-party assessments and evaluations of building technologies. These are the principles of BCJ. We will never forsake these principles. All BCJ personnel are committed to continue our efforts to further improve our reliable technical evaluation services, as well as to be a useful and cooperative company to our clients in order to satisfy business and social requirements. We sincerely hope for your continuous support and cooperation and also that you all enjoy a prosperous and healthy future. Thanks again for coming and sharing this memorable event with us.