

Toshikazu Koike × Ms. Agnes Chan

Representative Director & President Brother Industries, Ltd.

As a business and as people who inhabit the same planet

The Brother Group is developing Corporate Social Responsibility management throughout its worldwide operations to continue as a viable sustainable business amidst the close attention being paid to global environmental problems and numerous social issues. Brother Industries, Ltd.'s President Toshikazu Koike, who took his post in June 2007, and singer, UNICEF Ambassador and essayist Agnes Chan talked about the thinking behind that. (Tokyo, November 26, 2007)

Agnes Chan

Singer, essayist and Doctor of Education (PhD)
Born in 1955 in Hong Kong. Debuted in Japan in 1972 with "Hinageshi no Hana" (Poppy Flower). Attended Sophia University in Japan before graduating in social child psychology from the University of Toronto in Canada. Since 1985, has been mainly involved with charity concerts and volunteer activities. Recently earned an EdD from Stanford University in the USA. After becoming an Ambassador for the Japan Committee of UNICEF, has worked widely to eliminate poverty, starvation, AIDS and child abuse through lectures, books and singing. In 2005, received the Pestalozzi Education Award for her excellence in educational activities.



Now is the chance to reverse global warming.

Chan You make about 70% of your products in China and have several large manufacturing facilities in Guangdong Province. Both Shenzhen and Zhuhai are close to my hometown of Hong Kong and knowing that Brother and China are getting along makes me happy.

Koike Yes, we do. We also have manufacturing facilities in Xian and Shanghai, and about 15,000 Chinese, which equates to about two-thirds of our entire workforce, are working for us in China, so our production floors are very much alive. It is my cherished view and what we aim for in our CSR activities that the workplace be cheerful, fun and energetic. Everyone is working hard to make Brother a company they can be "glad to work for." However, as our relations with China deepen, the media is constantly reporting about environmental problems such as CO₂ emissions that contribute to global warming. It hurts me dearly to think that production at Brother is a part of that. Because we are borrowing the valuable resources, land and human resources of China to do business, I think it is only right that we must strengthen our efforts to further reduce the environmental load of our activities.

Chan Before, only NGOs talked about environmental problems, but now governments, people and - more than

anyone else - businesses are pouring their efforts into them. That is the kind of power to move the times, so now is the "chance to reverse these problems," I believe. Japanese businesses in particular lead the world in technology and they have developed an attitude of "okage-sama" (gratitude) that "we can live by someone's blessing." This kind of thinking will hopefully act as a major driving force to solving the environmental problems of Asia. There are many industrially advanced nations, but I personally think that Japan has the "magic wand" for cleaning up the environment.

Giving back 120% in appreciation for the work

Koike Hearing about the changes in China, governments and businesses are not the only ones who should be affluent. Affluence cannot be measured by materials alone. A company employee cannot be happy unless he/she has a stable living and is rich at heart. We need to target a higher level of affluence together with our associates. You began singing when you were young and today you cover a broad area of activities that must keep you extremely busy. I sense your professionalism and passion as a mother, wife and woman. Did you nurture that through your work?

Chan My work has always been given to me by someone. I am tremendously grateful for that. I appreciate the fact that they chose me and am always trying to think up ways to repay them. I always give it 100%, but I want to return the favor



120%. The person who invited me - I think - benefits when the people around him/her say it was a good idea to pick Agnes.

A company's social value lies in its ability to eternally provide an enjoyable workplace.

Chan I heard from you that you personally believe that "a company should continually and endlessly prosper forever." Was there anything in particular that led you to think that way?

Koike Brother's founding spirit was to create factories with pleasant atmospheres and create work for people wishing to work. These are the "social values of a company" and comply with my goals in life to be "cheerful, happy and vigorous," so I strongly sympathize with this. Because people spend a great portion of their life at their place of work, it would be sad if that time was "bitter, painful or gloomy." Of course, in navigating this strict business community, it is hard to avoid the ups and downs, but for that very reason, it means something to "be forward-looking in challenging new things, discover the joy of growing in that process and for a company to relentlessly direct its energies at building the foundations for the next generation while taking good care of its human resources." A constitution and attitude that continually maintain that kind of motivation are the prime conditions for a company to continually and endlessly prosper for many years. Only a company like that offers value that

society can recognize.

Chan Yea, I agree 100%. Whether one is happy or not depends on whether he/she believes that "life and work are fun". Real enjoyment is not about having fun with a bunch of people but about having dreams, people enjoying the things you make, producing results and increasing the number of people who work under the umbrella of Brother. There was a harsh tone in the things you said, Terry[※], but what work isn't harsh? It's because it's harsh that the joy of achievement is something special.

Koike Just like you said, people should be kind to others in the private world, but in a workplace that demands results, you cannot expect growth without being strict and, unless you grow, there will be no chances to stake new challenges.

[※]Koike is known by the nickname "Terry," which he has been affectionately called by his associates since his days working in the US.