



**Reflection on
Spring 2021
22 December 2021**



Virtue is not "knowing", but "doing". (Japanese Proverb)


Season's Greetings



MONOZUKURI

literally means "production" or "making of things" in Japanese, and is the Japanese term for "manufacturing". The broader meaning encompasses a synthesis of technological prowess, know-how and spirit of Japan's manufacturing practices.

Message from Chief Representative

We all need a sensei

Dear Readers

This time of the year one tends to get nostalgic, thinking about the happenings of the year, interrogating each activity, wondering if the response was the best one. So I find myself in the same space, reflecting on my tenure since my arrival in South Africa in May 2021. I am pleased that the environment lent itself to a hybrid approach, allowing a mix of virtual and in-person engagements. Many of my staff, including myself, could travel to project sites to monitor activities. Our work didn't stop.

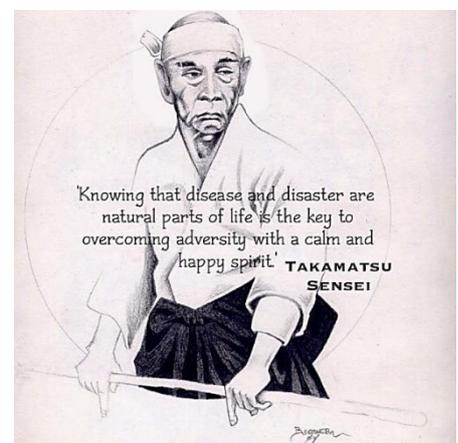
In Japan, the word "sensei" is an honorific term meaning "person born before another" or "one who comes before". Generally, with proper form, it's used after a person's name and means "teacher". It's also used as a title to refer to – or address – other professionals or persons of authority, or to show respect to someone who has achieved a certain level of mastery in a specific skill. The word can't be found in mainstream dictionaries, yet it dictates the way societies across the globe function.

My thought at this time, and my message for this edition, is the importance of hierarchy in our lives. A student needs a teacher, an intern a mentor, a worker a supervisor, an athlete a coach, an artist a muse, et cetera. The list is endless. For this reason, at whatever side we find ourselves, we can't afford to have questionable characters. In order to cultivate change agents, we ourselves need to be subjected to constant internal scrutiny. We also need to be willing to exercise great flexibility to customise our advice, guidance, and interventions. In other words, we need to establish what we know and what we don't know, as demonstrated by the Greek Philosopher Socrates some 2400 years ago. We need to keep learning from others. In fact, anyone around you could be your sensei!

In JICA's business, this is also applicable. Knowledge and skills can only be transferred by someone who has learnt through trial and error. Acceptance of the same can only be done if someone is receptive based on an understanding of challenges. In Japan, there's a saying that goes "If you understand everything, you must be misinformed".

Let me thank you for enabling us to do our work as best we could by accommodating our staff, experts, volunteers, mission members, and affiliates such as service providers in this unprecedented difficult situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. I feel positive about 2022. I wish for it to be a productive one, yet one in which humankind will display great character and a sincere desire to uplift one other.

Regards, **MINORU HOMMA**



On 4 November 2021, I visited the Wingfield Campus of the Northlink College in Cape Town, one of the project sites for the "Project for Capacity Development of Pilot TVET Colleges for Artisan". I was fortunate to have engaged with lecturers of the Fitting and Turning Course being offered at this Campus, which happens to be a Centre of Specialisation for this scarce trade.

Urban South Africa coins in on Japan's experience

“Knowledge Co-Creation Programme (KCCP): Public Finance Management for Development: Challenges to New Agenda under COVID-19”

All eight metros in South Africa, represented by 24 officials, are participating in this Country-Focused Training, which sees a partnership between JICA and National Treasury's Intergovernmental Relations to maximise available financial resources for improving basic service delivery. JICA is supporting metros to articulate, interrogate and tackle challenges restricting service delivery from a financial perspective. Topics include Public Administration, Public Finance, Urban Development, Public Private Partnership, Disaster Management and Resilient Infrastructure, and Local Economy and Recovery. Content is shared through videos, live discussions, and workshops. The training comprises of an online programme from August 2021 to February 2022 to produce draft action plans, and an observational tour to Japan afterwards to finalise such action plans. JICA contracted Enterprises at the University of Pretoria (EUP) to oversee implementation of the online programme, with Blackboard being the preferred platform for online learning. Lecturers from Japanese government entities, municipalities and the academia, are also participating.

“KCCP” is Technical Cooperation transferred through first-hand experience from Japanese know-how and social systems.

With Japan being renowned for its resilience, the training is also looking at local economic recovery in the wake of natural disasters and disease outbreaks, with COVID-19 severely affecting lives and livelihoods.



South Africans are familiar with this image, which is typical of the hustle-and-bustle of city life. Cape Town, affectionately called the “Mother City”, is the oldest and second largest city in **South Africa**, and is governed by the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality.

Worlds apart, but South Africa and Japan manage to find common ground



Mr Kyle Thebus, Principal Control and Instrumentation Engineer, City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

“I’m pleased to be part of the three-member team representing the City of Cape Town in the online programme. In my initial understanding, the overall programme aimed to take learnings from previous engagements between NT-IGR and JICA, as well as Japanese best-practise governance methodologies, tailor them for the South African context, and create a platform for implementation within the various municipalities. Instead, I’m being exposed to so much more; from problem analysis and issues identification methodologies to economic recovery strategies and everything in-between. Administratively, the programme has been a resounding success, with the use of integrated online systems for work and assignment tracking, as well as facilitating of group discussions, presentations and course communications. The programme has also afforded us the opportunity to make invaluable contacts both locally and internationally. I’m looking forward to the rest of the programme, to be concluded in February 2022, and of course, I’m hoping to be included in the team participating in the observational tour to Japan in 2022 to appreciate all the theory acquired in the online programme.”

There's just no stopping us!

“Quality and Productivity Improvement (Kaizen) Project”



Following JICA's approval of this Project, which sees a partnership with South Africa's Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), a survey team from Japan visited the country from 10 to 23 October 2021 to conduct the Detailed Planning Survey in preparation for implementation, scheduled from 2022 to 2027. The team met with an array of players, both those working in the automotive industry, and those concerned with quality and productivity. The players are listed below. “Kaizen”, a Japanese philosophy and management practice that evolved through Japan's industrial development, aims to enhance quality and productivity. South Africa's automotive industry has an appetite for Kaizen, and this Project is no exception.

AUDA-NEPAD Africa Kaizen Institute (AKI)
Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC)
Benchmarking and Manufacturing Analysts (B&M Analysts)
Industrial Development Corporation (IDC)
Kaizen Institute South Africa
Lean Institute Africa

Plastics South Africa
Productivity South Africa
Productivity Technology Association of South Africa (PTSA)
Toyota South Africa Motors (TSAM)
University of Cape Town (UCT)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

National Association of Automotive Component and Allied Manufacturers (NACCAM)
National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA)
National Foundry Technologies Network (NFTN)



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Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ms Thandi Phele, DTIC's Acting Deputy Director General of Industrial Competitiveness and Growth, hosted the Team during their visit to South Africa. The Team discussed the significance of Quality and Productivity Improvement (QPI) in South Africa.



Mr Mpho Pekane (JICA Programme Officer), Mr Kimiaki Jin (JICA Survey Team Member), Ms Phele, Mr Toru Homma (JICA Survey Team Leader), Ms Hitomi Kojima (JICA Project Formulation Advisor), and Ms Yuko Asakawa (JICA Survey Team Member).

Sharing a passion



Other than the DTIC and the above-listed players, the Team visited the Toyota Wessels Institute of Manufacturing Studies (TWIMS), a not-for-profit initiative dedicated to the development of manufacturing executives in Africa. Its world-class GIBS MBA is designed for those committed to the development of the African manufacturing sector.



Mr Jin and Prof Justin Barnes, Executive Director of TWIMS, have a long history in the academic world. During the visit, Mr Jin handed over a copy of the book titled “Applying the Kaizen in Africa: A New Avenue for Industrial Development”, for which he's one of three authors, to Prof Barnes.

JICA shifts focus to Respite Care

“Advisor for the Respite Care Programme for Children with Disabilities and their Families”

For several years now, JICA and South Africa’s Department of Social Development (DSD) have been working together on various initiatives to capacitate persons with disabilities. Yet again, JICA and DSD have regrouped, this time for the Respite Care Project. For the next two years, Ms Maho Harada, JICA Advisor, will be working with counterparts at DSD’s Directorate of Services to Persons with Disabilities. The Project targets children with disabilities and their parents, as well as social workers. Amongst others, the Project explores ways for persons with disabilities to continue with life in spite of COVID-19. The Project has two sites, being Upington in the Northern Cape, and Mbombela in Mpumalanga. In October 2021, Ms Harada visited Upington along with national, provincial and district officials from DSD, the Oasis Skills Development Centre, and the Association for People with Physical Disabilities (APD) to discuss activities. Fruitful deliberations on everyday challenges requiring government intervention, involving youth with disabilities and their families, were held. The establishment of a working group is now in progress. The Project will be officially launched early in 2022.



On 23 September 2021, Mr Minoru Homma, JICA’s Chief Representative, and Hon Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, Deputy Minister of Social Development, met in Pretoria to exchange views on the Project.

I know you!



Ms Maho Harada is working as JICA Advisor for DSD’s Respite Care Programme.

DID YOU KNOW?

South Africa’s “Disability Rights Awareness Month” was held from 3 November 2021 to 3 December 2021, whilst “International Day of Persons with Disabilities”, declared by the United Nations (UN), was held on 3 December 2021.

On 12 November 2021, Hon Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, Deputy Minister of Social Development, awarded JICA with a “Certificate of Appreciation” for ongoing support to disability mainstreaming and empowerment. Receiving the award was Mr Minoru Homma, JICA’s Chief Representative.



Caring for the Caregiver

What is “respite care”?

Respite care is temporary care arranged for a person, in this case someone with a disability, so that the people who usually care for that person, such as a family member, can have a short rest or a chance to do something which they otherwise never get time for.



JICA Volunteers: South Africa's "Class of 2021"



The COVID-19 pandemic saw all JICA human resources, including volunteers, returning to Japan in 2020. However, given great strides in the response, volunteers are gradually returning.



Who are "JICA Volunteers"?

By choice, affirming the existence and importance of humanity and the human spirit, some Japanese are living and working in rural areas of South Africa, eSwatini and Lesotho. Volunteers, tasked with both skills transfer and cultural exchange, are passionate about development and fostering lasting friendships. When returning to Japan after dispatch periods ranging from a few months to two years, volunteers share their experiences with their own communities back home.

Mr Atsushi Hayakawa is working at the Londonani Care Centre in the Ravali Village near Makhado in Limpopo. This Centre cares for learners with special needs.

Reaching for a pen means reaching for the stars!



Mr Shintaro Yamamoto is focusing on Science Education at Penreach's Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) Centre in Mbombela, Mpumalanga. This Centre prepares children to pursue careers in scarce skills, and is a provincial hub for the most important learning areas in the 21st Century. Penreach is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working towards educational excellence in disadvantaged rural communities in Mpumalanga. It provides access to quality education, and is known for its impact at community level.

Joining Mr Yamamoto for the commemoration of the establishment of the OR Tambo Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy (MSTA) in Emalahleni, were Ms Xoliswa Lee (Intern) and Mr Sakhile Ntshangase (Programme Officer), both from Penreach's Mathematics and Science Team. Mr Yamamoto seized the opportunity to do exhibits and experiments on Science, his passion in life.

Editor's Note

JANET

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Life comes in waves:

Don't get caught up in the turbulence!

Dear Readers

Greetings! I'm pleased to be issuing this edition at the end of 2021.

Here we are, a year later, still facing the worst health crisis that the 21st Century has seen thus far. In fact, undoubtedly the worst crisis of our generation. We've certainly experienced extremes over the last 12 months, more so than in 2020. Our emotions have fluctuated from hopeless to hopeful, and many of us were forced to do introspection and retrospection on life, with some sense of urgency. Suddenly, a country's demographics or population or income status was no longer important. The reality was that the global population was (and remains to be) at risk.

And back home? Like flickering flames of candles in pitch-dark South African homes during loadshedding, our fuses were short. We had no choice but to accept.

We got lost in translation in the countdown to the local government elections, held our breaths as citizens queued at polling stations, and suddenly saw an abrupt end to it all. Why did so few citizens eligible for voting not pitch up? Will change come, or has this just been another "one for the record"? We had no choice but to accept.

We found ourselves contemplating the same question as those at William Shakespeare's side when he uttered the words "To be or not to be" in the early 1600s. Suddenly, we were silently pondering on the dilemma "To vaccinate or not to vaccinate". Unlike our vote in the elections being "our secret" with not much interest from our fellows, everyone around us wanted to benchmark our stance on the controversial antidote to the infamous COVID-19 and its equally despising variants. We had no choice but to accept.

But that's the thing about life. Whilst people are throwing around words like "resilience" as if it's fashionable, we have no choice but to follow the herd and apply it to our own lives. Has the time come for us to accept that "global village" is no longer merely a concept invented by academics, but a stark yet promising reality that we need each other to survive the ebbs and flows of life?



I bet you've seen this before! It's the Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai's most famous work and is often considered the most recognisable work of Japanese art in the world. Titled "The Great Wave off Kanagawa", also known as "The Great Wave" or "The Wave", is a woodblock print. It was published between 1829 and 1833 in the late Edo Period as the first print in Hokusai's series "Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji". The image depicts an enormous wave threatening three boats off the coast in the Sagami Bay (Kanagawa Prefecture) with Mount Fuji rising in the background. Often assumed to be a tsunami, the wave is more likely to be a large rogue wave. It somehow reminds me of the fourth wave now developing the potential to strip us of the hope which only a new year can bring. But will we allow this to instill the same fear as the news of the hard lockdown announced on 23 March 2020 did? No. We'll swim out to shore. We'll bask under the African sun. We'll carry on. And we'll carry ourselves well.