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株式会社オリエンタルコンサルタンツグローバル インド国デリー事務所が Bloomberg TV で放映されました

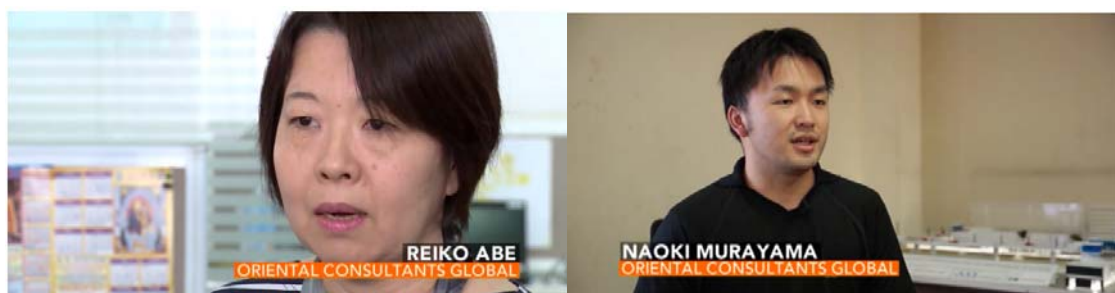
当社グループの事業会社である株式会社オリエンタルコンサルタンツグローバル（本社：東京都渋谷区、社長：廣谷 彰彦）インド国デリー事務所の阿部玲子軌道交通事業部軌道交通技術部プロジェクト部長(Oriental Consultants India Pvt.Ltd.社長)と村山直輝エンジニアのインタビューが、2015年5月29日（金）に Bloomberg TV で放映されました。

本インタビューは、Japan Times および New York Times にも同様の内容で掲載されています。
Bloomberg TV のインタビュー記事は次ページ以降をご覧ください。

【Bloomberg TV で放映された画面】



インド国バンガロールメトロでの撮影



阿部玲子軌道交通事業部軌道交通技術部プロジェクト部長
Oriental Consultants India Pvt.Ltd.社長

村山直輝エンジニア

【Bloomberg TV インタビュー記事】

Reiko Abe became a civil engineer in Japan, but she couldn't find a job. An ancient Shinto superstition, made part of Japan's labor law, held that if a woman entered a tunnel under construction, she would anger the jealous mountain goddess and cause worker accidents.

Two decades later, Abe has become the face of Japan's global engagement as the nation seeks to overcome its image as an economic laggard and a wasteland for career women. Television advertisements featuring her have run on CNN and the BBC. She's been [lauded by](#) Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (no relation) for showcasing Japan's strengths abroad and symbolizing why the country needs to promote more women in a workforce where [less than 5 percent](#) of managers are female.

The irony? Abe, 51, had to leave Japan. After overseeing construction safety on Indian metro projects for seven years, she's been promoted to head Oriental Consultants India Pvt., a unit of Tokyo-based ACKG Ltd. The company is working to extend subway systems in New Delhi and Mumbai and build them in cities including Bengaluru and Ahmedabad. Abe is also overseeing a mass transit project in Jakarta, having previously worked on Taiwan's high-speed rail, the metro in Ukraine's capital, an undersea tunnel in Norway and an urban-planning project in Qatar.

No Helmet

Striding across a construction site, the diminutive Abe yells at a worker who isn't wearing a safety helmet.

"The most important thing to me is safety," Abe, wearing her own hard hat, neon safety vest and construction boots, explains during one of several interviews over the past month. "That may be because I'm a woman. I feel that deeply, and I think I sense it in a different way from other engineers because I'm a woman."

She's also aware of the impact she's having for women in providing safe transportation. In a city ignominiously known as the nation's rape capital, Abe says Delhi's women tell her that being able to ride without fear in a clean, air-conditioned car in segregated carriages has been unimaginably liberating.

"It's something that was taken for granted by men, but wasn't the norm for women," explains Abe. One of her happiest memories is of a young woman thanking her for the subway extension that allowed her to move freely across the city.

"As a result of what I helped construct, women in Delhi are able to have a mode of public transport that's safe for the first time," she says. "That's an incredible outcome. I'd like to see that across India."

Rapes Continue

Delhi has seen a scourge of high-profile assaults on women. A 2012 gang rape and murder of a student on a moving bus sparked nationwide protests. Other rapes have made headlines since then, including of a Danish woman who had lost her way back to her hotel and an Indian woman [taking an Uber](#) last year.

The capital's residents this week sought refuge in the metro's air-conditioned stations amid a deadly heat wave that was melting asphalt on roads.

Abe follows a punishing travel schedule. She lives out of hotels and doesn't bother renting a home. She's usually the only woman on site surrounded by as many as 40,000 male workers.

"She's a very bold and daring lady," said G.K. Reddy, a contractor on the Bengaluru metro who has known her since 2010, describing how Abe clambered up a reinforced slope during a quality audit to test its safety. "I was shocked."

Toppling Buildings

South Asian projects can test the most experienced engineers. Boring tunnels below poorly constructed buildings is challenging because shaking the ground can topple them. The armies of laborers often are illiterate, speak a multitude of languages and lack skills. In Bengaluru, the state-run company that contracted Oriental Consultants to help build the metro was comprised of 100 people who had never seen a subway, let alone built one, Abe said.

“You come across situations you’d never imagine in Japan,” she said. “You have to be physically resilient, tough and flexible.”

Reddy describes an “on-the-job and off-the-job” Abe. One is a tireless supervisor, often more demanding than her male counterparts, who demands quality and punctuality and berates those who don’t meet her standards -- which he said is essential in time-bound infrastructure projects where contractors are tempted to cut corners. The other is a down-to-earth colleague who hands out juices and mingles with workers of all levels, overcoming her gender and origin in hierarchy-bound India.

“People like her. When she comes, they try harder,” said Reddy. “Not only India, but everywhere you need more people like her. I hope one of my daughters will be the next Ms. Abe.”

Follow Instructions

Abe admits she’s quick to anger. She says she fired at least seven drivers in India, and among the most important qualities she looks for when hiring is the ability to follow instructions. When a client in the Middle East once refused to discuss the project’s finances with a woman, she stonily told him that was his problem, as she couldn’t change her sex.

“I lose my temper about once a day, but sometimes I just have to laugh,” she said, recounting the time a contractor forgot to prepare for a quality audit and brought her a tub of ice cream to make up for it.

Despite Abe’s efforts, the projects come with glitches. The Bengaluru metro’s first line was supposed to be completed in 2011, and currently less than half of it is operating.

It’s unclear whether the new deadline of September will be met. Delays have escalated the cost by nearly 20 percent, the Times of India reported, citing sources it didn’t name in the Bangalore Metro Rail Corp. Abe acknowledges that the Delhi metro, whose first phase was completed on budget and almost three years ahead of schedule due to exacting standards imposed by former head of the Delhi Metro Rail Corp. E. Sreedharan, is an exception for Indian infrastructure projects.

Transforming India

India’s metros, financed by low-cost government loans from Japan, are the types of projects that India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi hopes will help modernize his nation. For Japan, Abe plays a key role in bringing Japan’s advanced technology, infrastructure expertise, quality management and track record of safety to countries such as India, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in an e-mailed response to questions.

“We’re pleased that a Japanese woman is at the forefront in the field, demonstrating her professional ability and helping to transform Indian society for the better,” it said.

In a Bloomberg View column in April, Japan’s prime minister wrote that Japanese women such as Abe working abroad serve as a model of female engagement with the workplace.

“Japan cannot truly thrive in the 21st century unless all our citizens reach their fullest potential,” the premier wrote.

No Future

After graduating with a [civil engineering](#) degree from Yamaguchi University, a first for a woman at the institution, Abe discovered that Shinto beliefs and paternalistic notions about protecting women left her without a future. Japan's Labor Standards Act, which banned women from underground construction sites and mines, wouldn't be [revised](#) until 2006. (Pregnant and post-natal women are [still barred](#).)

"No matter how hard I studied or gained experience, I was at a disadvantage because I was a woman," Abe said. "I had to find ways to overcome that disadvantage: learn English, gain experience in developing countries, work on difficult South Asian projects. Somewhere along the way, all of those things became my weapons."

In less than a year, she taught herself English. She beat 4,000 applicants for a spot in a master's degree program at the [Norwegian University of Science and Technology](#) and left in 1995. A training position gave her a shot, finally, to work in a tunnel: the undersea North Cape project linking Norway's mainland to Mageroya island.

Making Things

"If I'd been a man, I wouldn't have gone overseas because there would've been no reason to," she said. "For me, it was the only way to survive. That makes me glad I'm a woman."

Abe liked to make things from a young age -- a tendency reinforced as an only child moved from rural Yamaguchi prefecture to Osaka city when her father's business failed. Suddenly without friends, she retreated into a world where she would build things, such as her own doll house.

She also cites her mother, a schoolteacher, as a role model who supported her decision to study engineering. She didn't tell her father until a year after enrolling.

"He was so shocked that he dropped the sake cup he was holding when I finally told him," she said. "He was very opposed. He told me I would never make it. Today, I guess he's proud of me. Or maybe he's just given up on me!"

Abe's father says he had originally wanted his daughter to become a teacher like her mother because he was "scared to see Reiko jumping into a man's world."

A Panda

“Of course when I see her in the newspapers and magazines, I’m happy,” he said in e-mailed comments relayed by the family. “If Reiko says it’s all right, that’s what matters.”

Abe carries her experiences of discrimination lightly. In Taiwan, tunnel workers were also reluctant to have a female engineer on site.

“They were able to accept me by not seeing me as either a man or woman,” she explained. “I was neither, something unusual, like a panda.”

Abe, though, seems uncomfortable opining on her nation’s future or whether it’s changing fast enough to meet the challenges posed by declining demographics.

“I do feel like I’ve become a representative of Japan’s globalization,” Abe said. “But I’m actually very embarrassed by the attention.”

Yet she has no doubt where her career opportunities lie.

“I don’t think I will ever return to Japan to work,” said Abe, whose goal is to see India’s first bullet train. “I want to be the top, not just among women, but among all Japanese engineers.”

<本資料に関するお問い合わせ先>

株式会社オリエンタルコンサルタンツグローバル

TEL: 03-6311-7890

URL: <http://www.oriconsulglobal.com/>

軌道交通事業部軌道交通技術部 阿部玲子