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Closing Remarks

Jörg SCHNEIDER

Secretary of the Scientific Committee
Prof.
Swiss Fed. Inst. of Technology
Zurich, Switzerland

Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It was a big pleasure for me to be here in this room and hopefully also for you. I cannot make up my mind which was the best event: Was it what was going on during the day? Was it the splendid welcome reception or the marvellous Japanese night? If I had to decide, I would most likely choose the last two.

It has also been a big undertaking which kept a couple of people busy for some three years. And - judging from myself - we all are rather tired.

Well: I have been chosen to deliver the Closing Remarks at this memorable IABSE Symposium. On the other hand, I have been educated by my parents not to always try to have the last word. There are two exceptions to this rule. You may have the last word if:

1. the last word is really clever
2. the last word is just a pleasant joke that hurts nobody.

As I had little option in standing here and as I am rather poor in telling jokes I shall try the first alternative, though I do not pretend to be clever. I just follow my personal preferences:

Quality Assurance is a matter of people. It is a matter of people who are working together towards a common goal within the so-called Building Process. I think of people such as the client, the owner, the structural engineers, the architect, the contractor, the labourer on site, the users of structures, the community and, obviously, also the lawyers. And, maybe, others.

We, the engineers, have been mainly enjoying ourselves here, some in the position of the designer, some others in the position of clients, owners and contractors. Absent were mainly the architects, the users and the lawyers, not to speak of the site workers.

It is a matter of fact that within this Building Process some of these people working towards a common goal often work against each other in their daily affairs. This is regrettable.



What is to blame more is the fact that often even engineers in their different positions work against each other having an open eye to the interests of those they represent and a rather blind eye to the problem areas of their professional colleagues.

These people - I think you will readily agree with me - are wrong. Not working against each other but working together towards a common goal is, in the end, the only way to an optimal solution. And a solution is optimal only if it is at least acceptable to all the people involved.

Who are those people who often are wrong in placing personal or group interests above the search for the optimum solution, in the search for excellence, as the title of a worthwhile book reads? It's all of us. It is you and me on many occasions. And that's to blame, we all know that. And that's why something has to be changed.

We have to take heed to ourselves more carefully in our daily work and within our professional relations. It is a matter of consciousness, a matter of awareness, of self-awareness, that might help in the search for excellence, for the best solution. It sometimes is also a matter of self-esteem, and of the readiness to respond, to be responsible. It is a matter of looking to the problems and needs of our professional neighbours. It is a matter of taking into account within our decisions also their problems and needs, be it up or down the development line of the process.

What is requested is a new attitude by people involved in the Building Process. From the "Japanese Way" brought into this symposium by many colleagues of our host country this attitude got clearer: What is requested is mutual trust, faith and confidence in the partners we meet as our professional neighbours.

Ideas can be promoted through the use of the right notions: For a long time I had been looking for a good word to describe this new attitude which I think is so badly needed, at least in Europe, but probably all over the world. My search was positive. I found what I had been looking for. I cannot say I found it here in Japan. But it could have been here.

The word I finally found springs from the French Revolution. The slogan that moved the world was: "Liberté, égalité, fraternité". I read it this way:

LIBERTY of thought and speech, in education, art and science
EQUALITY before the law, and
FRATERNITY in economic relations.

I take the last word from this slogan and put it here: What we really need is "Fraternity", more fraternal attitudes in our economic, in our professional relations everywhere, and also within the Building Process. I would like to leave this word with you and ask you to think about it.

Meanwhile it is my pleasure and privilege to thank

- the Japanese Group of IABSE for all their care. I especially mention here
 - . Mr. Takeda and Professor Kokubu chairing the Japanese Organizing Committee
 - . Mr. Ito, Mr. Ohashi and Mr. Takanashi of the Steering Committee
 - . Mr. Ishikawa and Mr. Mino chairing the Finance Committee.
- I thank my dear friend Professor Maeda for his effective and friendly chairing the Scientific Committee
- I thank all the Japanese ladies for their splendid and warm hospitality
- I thank the speakers for their endeavour
- the interpreters for their hard work in their boxes
- all the very many unnamed ladies and gentlemen behind the scene
- and finally all of you for attending this Symposium.

I wish you a pleasant stay for the remaining time here in Japan and a happy and safe journey home to your country, to your family and to your work. May your activities be influenced by these few days here in Japan.

Sayonara

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