

## Protecting important assets during earthquakes

(Photo, left and center: House of Mr. Hiroshi Soutome and Mrs. Keiko Soutome, right: SHIZUOKA DAIICHI TELEVISION)

### Creating a new business combining house moving and seismic isolation work



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and  
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Two years ago, we had to move our house because the municipal road next to it was about to be widened. This gave me the idea to be the first in our prefecture to combine house moving with seismic isolation technology. I then submitted a business innovation plan to the authorities, and became eligible for a Business Activities Promotion approved by the governor of Tochigi Prefecture.

We have been in business for 109 years, and I represent the fourth generation of house movers.\* In college, I learned about the Urban Earthquake Disaster Prevention Plan, and I developed a strong interest in seismic isolation. Besides being engaged in house moving, I was attending regular meetings of the Seismic Isolation Society, and this is where I came in contact with the people of THK. When I heard that seismic isolators were installed at THK's UTSUNOMIYA Branch, I went there to have a look. I had also been exposed to the marketing campaigns for seismic isolators of other manufacturers, but when I saw the isolators that incorporated rolling technology, I was really impressed. I was so taken by the frequent visits and enthusiasm of the sales person that I decided to use THK's seismic isolators.

I was not in my house on the day of the Great East Japan Earthquake. At home, my wife, who gives lessons on how to

wear a kimono, was busy teaching her students. At my office, framed pictures apparently fell off the wall and scattered all over the floor. At home, however, not a single glass had broken, and it seems that my wife continued with her lesson. When our daughter-in-law, who had joined the lesson, returned to her home, some of her furniture had fallen over and household goods were strewn all over the floor. This made her realize for the first time the impact of the earthquake. Because of the frequent aftershocks, she stayed at our home that night where she felt relaxed enough to sleep. After that, aftershocks continued for a while and we could feel the ground trembling below us. Luckily our house was not at all affected and we have been able to continue our lives without incident. I realize that this is because of THK's seismic isolators that we installed in our home, and I am deeply impressed.

We are keeping our house open for anyone interested in taking a look at our seismic isolators. Please drop by and see for yourself. Going forward, I hope to be increasingly involved in construction work dealing with seismic isolation and the moving of shrines, temples and other important cultural assets. Doing this in cooperation with THK would be a real pleasure for me.

\* House moving : A construction method used to comply with land readjustment measures for preservation and protection of historical buildings or moving structures to another location so they need not be knocked down.