

## **“Living the way I am in the community, I am now a lovable government employee”**

Tetsuyuki Akashi(Kawasaki city office)

Hello, everyone. My name is Tetsuyuki Akashi, a 38-year-old employee of the Kawasaki Municipal Government. I am a happy, hard-working adult. I worked for the “Cho-ju Soh” care home for elderly until March, 2009, before I was transferred to Yumemigaoka Zoological Park in April the same year. I am familiar with the zoological park, where I, as a child, often walked around and played almost every day. I feel very excited about working for the park and determined to work hard.

As a child, I attended the “Saiwai” community training program close to the park, before going onto Ogura Childcare Center and then to Ogura Elementary School. Later, as my father was transferred, I moved to an elementary school in Saga, where I spent five years. At the age of 12, I came back to Kawasaki to attend Hiyoshi Junior High in Saiwai-ward of the city.

As I wanted to go on to senior high school by all means, I studied very hard at junior high. My efforts were rewarded, and I was enrolled at a part-time high school. I fully enjoyed the four-year-period that I attended the school. It was a night high school, and I worked at the workshop named “Aozora (Blue-sky) House” in the daytime, which my mother and other people set up for us.

The Aozora-House is a green grocery workshop. I enjoyed delivering goods to our customers on board a vehicle. I particularly liked the words of appreciation from our customers when handing the orders to them. I sold a lot of vegetables, and I sold them at bazaars as well.

Mr. Iwase of Taiyodo, a stationer, took interest in me when I was working at the grocery, and I started to work for his shop. I enjoyed working there, dealing with a great number of customers from the neighborhood and junior high school girls. My work there included cleaning, placing goods on the shelves, and delivering them. I cleaned even neighborhood shops and streets.

Before finishing high school, I was engaged in seven different jobs, including house chore assistance, assembling appliances, cleaning parks, inventory management at warehouses, and garbage collection on board a truck. Among them I liked best garbage collection. Since my childhood, I really loved garbage trucks. I was, however, fired as a part-time garbage collector after a week, despite my appeal to keep me hired. I felt very sad.

My mother suggested to me, then, to take the exam to become a government worker, which she said had a very good job security. I agreed to her advice.

My mother and high school teachers helped me to prepare for the exam in such a way that facilitated my understanding of the test subjects. I also studied hard after coming home from school at 10 o'clock.

I successfully passed it, yet it took a year and half to become employed after that, which kept me very nervous. After a long wait, I was very happy about the July-1-1993 decision to hire me.

Since I started working, what makes me most happy is praises that Mr. Isao Hasegawa, my boss, gives to me to appreciate my work to keep everything clean at all the times.

I have made bathtubs and toilettes squeaky clean to the extent that he said that I have transformed yellowish ceramics into white ones.

Since my childhood, I always love water and cleaning toilettes. I worked very hard.

I was transferred to Health & Welfare Bureau after my stint in Environmental Bureau. I worked at "Tamagawa-no-sato", a nursing care home for elderly, and then at "Choju-soh", a welfare center for older people. At "Tamagawa-no-sato", I cleaned tatami mats and bathtubs, and I made rough sketches for elderly people to color them.

I love drawing. I made all the illustrations on the covers and pages of the books that my mother authored. I was mainly responsible for cleaning buildings and gardens at "Choju-soh". I really loved cleaning the gardens and feeding carp.

The NHK (Japan's national broadcasting network) featured me in their documentary films: One was titled "Egao-de-Machi-ni-Kurasu (Enjoy living in the community)(25 minute-long)" and aired in November, 1999, and the other "Oshigoto-Ganbarimasu (I will work hard)(50-minute-long)" was broadcast in February, 2000, throughout Japan and to the rest of the world. I also appeared in a live 50-minute-long TV show titled "Seikatsu-Hot-Morning" in August, 2005.

Some staff from Korean Broadcasting Corporation went out of their way to come to Japan to feature me in their KBS Sunday Special "Happy Rain Man-Running into the world". After the airing of the show, I got letters from Korea about the show, and a group of visitors, who came to see the "Aozora-House" and other locations. Korean publishers had my mother's books translated into the local language, and published three volumes of comic books featuring me. I also had opportunities to visit the USA, Korea and China to deliver speeches.

As the title "I will work hard" indicates, I love rolling up sleeves and getting my hands dirty in order to help others. I also love being paid for the work that I have done.

I spend my income on my favorite things and on traveling or hobbies. I am glad that I have enough

income to enjoy my hobbies and pleasure.

The next thing I would like to achieve is to get married and create “Tetsuyuki Akashi’s family.” I have already decided on my children’s names and asked my mother to find for me “the mother of Maiko and Mamoru Akashi’s mother”. I am really interested in getting married. As I have been working very hard, I will be trying very hard to find my partner. Your support for me to tie the knots will be greatly appreciated.