

Social Performance



Hino Motors is determined to supply customers with high-quality vehicles, and this means it is committed to preserving and constantly refining its manufacturing techniques. This is why Hino Motors is focusing on enhancing and handing down the manufacturing capabilities of its employees. In this special feature, we present an example of how Hino Motors has been contributing to community development—one of the Company’s key CSR activity domains—through formal education and technical skills training designed to ensure that better—quality products are delivered to customers.

Shigemitsu Kimura of the Vehicle Planning, Production and Engineering Division was recognized for his superior craftsmanship when he received a fiscal 2014 Contemporary Master Craftsman Award for outstanding skilled workers in the metalworking category from Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Mr. Kimura is a graduate of the Hino Technical Skills Academy, a vocational school run by the Company as a core center for passing down its technical capabilities. From his enrollment at the school through graduation, he honed his technical skills while receiving instruction from Tadashi Saeki, a technical expert who has also been recognized with a Contemporary Master Craftsman Award. In this light, the award given to Kimura not only demonstrates the advanced capabilities of Hino Motors but also points to how these specialized skills are being handed down to younger generations.



Passing down advanced techniques from one master craftsman to another

The Contemporary Master Craftsman Award is a nationally authorized award in Japan that publicly recognizes outstanding skilled workers, aiming to elevate the status of expert craftsmen and encourage higher technical standards. Workers who meet all of the conditions for the award, such as possessing a very high level of skills, are nominated by the country’s prefectural governments and other bodies, and the final winners are selected by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare based on the recommendations of a panel of judges comprised of expert craftsmen.

Hino Motors’ fifth employee to receive the award, Shigemitsu Kimura was recognized as a master sheet metal worker, capable of shaping a single metal sheet just by hammering it. He studied under Tadashi Saeki, a highly skilled sheet metal craftsman who, even early in his career, had won a gold medal in the WorldSkills Competition.

After graduating from the Hino Technical Skills Academy, Kimura was assigned to work under Saeki in the prototype department, where he helped make prototype vehicles using sheet metal according to the designs of product developers. Accordingly, he played an important role in evaluating whether prototypes could be mass produced and in providing feedback on designs drawn up in formal diagrams.

Kimura is particularly skilled in sheet metal hammer-forming work and surface finishing work. For example, he can form vehicle components such as fenders so that the welded areas are not visible, and hammer-form a 0.8-millimeter-thin metal sheet into a door or other component at a high level of precision of plus or minus 0.5 millimeters. Likewise, he can finish a metal surface to a level of smoothness not exceeding 0.01 millimeters.



Tadashi Saeki (left) and Shigemitsu Kimura



Shigemitsu Kimura teaches students how to form the hood of a truck.



The culmination of these expert skills can be seen in the form of a Hino Motors' 1966 BH15 model bus on display at the Hino Auto Plaza in the city of Hachioji in Tokyo. The bus was restored by Kimura, who removed the rusted parts, welded together newly formed components, and refinished the surface.

Nowadays, Kimura is busy teaching junior workers and training employees so they can acquire certification for sheet metal working. As a master craftsman, he is helping ensure that the Hino Motors tradition of continuing to raise up the next generation of master craftsmen is alive and well.



This 1966 BH15 model bus on display at the Hino Auto Plaza was restored by Shigemitsu Kimura.

Technical Education at the Hino Technical Skills Academy

The Hino Technical Skills Academy

Since it was established in 1951, the Hino Technical Skills Academy has striven to provide training in manufacturing techniques and develop human resources, including alumnus Shigemitsu Kimura, as both a Hino Motors' training school and a community-based educational institution.

As members of Hino Motors, the students of the academy are given a student allowance, and a dormitory is provided for new students coming from distant places.

Forty new students are admitted each year, and the ratio of applicants to admissions was 2.5 most recently, indicating the academy's high standards for entry compared to the average of 1.56 for high schools in the Tokyo Metropolitan area in 2015. Students must pass an entrance examination covering mathematics and writing in both Japanese and English, as well as an interview with a representative of the academy, a Hino Motors human resources manager and a factory human resources manager, who evaluate candidates based on their suitability as students of the academy and future employees of Hino Motors.



Specialized Curriculum

The academy's curriculum includes applied studies for four weeks of each school year at nearby manufacturing plants, enabling students to gain diverse knowledge and experience related to vehicles assembly production. Students also prepare for technical skills tests and national exams, through which they acquire qualifications. Classes include Japanese, mathematics and all other subjects required for a high school diploma upon graduation. Students also participate in club activities, a school festival, and various field trips, including a visit to a Hino Motors factory in the United States. The Hino Technical Skills Academy boasts strong loyalty among its alumni, as students move through the program with the same cohort, participate in club activities with lower and higher grade pupils, and can join class reunions held every two years after graduation.



A visitor directly experiences production techniques at the school festival.

The Role of the Hino Technical Skills Academy

The Hino Technical Skills Academy plays a vital role in handing down the manufacturing capabilities needed for Hino Motors to supply high-quality vehicles to customers, as its graduates are assigned to important positions at Hino Motors' manufacturing plants, where they become actively involved in overcoming various challenges.

Recently, Hino Motors has been carrying out a program through which employees who have graduated from the academy serve as teachers for a three-year period. Becoming a teacher at the academy by demonstrating technical skills and leadership is also a future goal for many students. Employees who have been assigned as teachers have studied to pass national exams and acquire teacher credentials while striving to improve themselves and gain opportunities

to learn many things by instructing young people. This, in turn, contributes positively to Hino Motors' efforts to ensure a high level of craftsmanship.



Contemporary Master Craftsman Award winners Tadashi Saeki and Shigemitsu Kimura visit a sheet metal class for students in their first year at the academy. The class has been held for 47 years, and Saeki and Kimura both took the class, in its 8th and 21st year, respectively. The current class instructor, Yorikazu Sakai, is a Hino Motors employee who learned sheet metal working at the company from Kimura

Comments

Hoping to have many opportunities to pass on my skills to future generations

Shigemitsu Kimura

Vehicle Planning, Production and Engineering Division, Hino Motors, Ltd.

Tadashi Saeki was recognized with the Contemporary Master Craftsman Award before I was, and although he has already reached retirement age, I still regard him as my mentor. I first met him when I was in my second year at the Hino Technical Skills Academy, and since that time, he has taught me many different sheet metal working techniques at the academy and at work. In the past, I worked hard to be the best at what I do, but I never thought I would receive the award. When I told Mr. Saeki that I had won it, he was extremely happy, almost as if he had won it himself. In that sense, my award was like a symbol of how his skills were passed down, so it was one way by which I could repay my gratitude to him. For me, that was the most satisfying thing about receiving the award.

At work, when I give employees instructions on sheet metal working, I don't show them fixed methods. Instead, I teach them how to think deeply for themselves, applying their own sensibilities to make things using various methods. That is one of the things I learned from Mr. Saeki. Now two of his apprentices are active as teachers at the academy. Since it is very important to hand down technical skills, I hope to have many more opportunities to teach those skills to young people.



Passing down Hino's spirit and manufacturing expertise to the next generation

Toji Nakajima

Manager, Hino Technical Skills Academy

The Hino Technical Skills Academy is the training ground for passing down the skills needed for ensuring the future of Hino Motor's manufacturing. The school ensures that students gain a broad understanding of all aspects of vehicle production by teaching the basics.

After graduating, many students hope to continue being involved with the academy as instructors and pass on the experience they gained from good teachers the academy's education.

Students at the academy are highly motivated to improve their skills, and its graduates have made a name for themselves as winners at the Company's skills competitions. An employee who graduated from the academy will be acting as a deputy mechanic at the Dakar Rally when it starts in January 2016. I am very delighted that one of our former students has been given such an opportunity. It makes my job feel all the more rewarding.

Because manufacturing methods are rapidly changing and being replaced by new methods, I want to make sure the academy's curriculum is updated so that the latest information is taught to students.

