

Appreciating Our Fathers

Executive Director
Satoshi Nishidoi



This April, as I do every year in the spring, I welcomed the latest group of eager new employees into our ranks. Seeing them led me to reminisce about my own entrance into the company as an office worker roughly 40 years ago, and inspired me to write the following to today's young engineers.

I recalled how our fathers, after having lost World War II, rebuilt a nation in ruin as they chased the dream of one day meeting and eventually surpassing the West economically. My generation, enamored of Westerners' sleek cars, televisions, refrigerators, and beautiful, air-conditioned homes worked towards the same dream.

The post-war economy, centered on textiles for export that could compete with Western industry in terms of price, gradually enriched the domestic economy, leading to Japan's remarkable development that continued with the Tokyo Olympics and the Osaka World's Fair, saw Japan catch up to the West, and ended with the collapse of the Bubble economy. I say without hesitation that the catalyst of this economic development was technological expertise and high-quality manufacturing.

In 1965, Toyota's vehicle production stood at 0.5 million vehicles, a mere seventh of GM's 3.5 million, while Fujitsu's sales were below 5% of IBM's. At that time, Toyota and Fujitsu set their respective sights on GM and IBM.

The numerous inventions, discoveries, and new products of the past 40 years have changed our lives in a myriad of ways. The fact that the computations I once struggled to perform on an abacus can now be performed on a calculator sold at 100 yen shops has

made a great impression throughout my business career. Currently, the desktop PCs have the same performance of mainframes once used for in-house system and developed in term of speed, while cellular telephones that had to be carried in a bag with a shoulder strap 20 years ago can now fit in a shirt pocket. These products were all made possible by advances in miniaturization and performance. The switch from the vacuum tubes of the past to LSIs allowed electronic parts to be shrunk to incredibly small sizes while increasing their performance and lowering their cost, speeding up Japanese product development and enabling Japan to achieve a quality of life on par with that of the West. Although it goes without saying that these technological developments enriched Japan's economy, their influence also spurred growth at Toyota and Fujitsu.

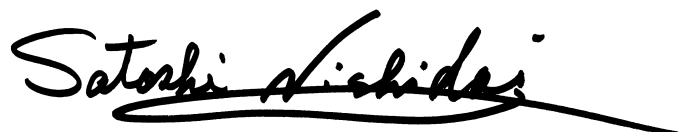
As of 2004, Toyota had progressed to the point where it was producing 7.55 million vehicles to GM's 9.1 million. Toyota has caught up and is poised to overtake GM in the near future, while Fujitsu now sells 2/3 as much as IBM. These results were brought about by perseverance, which is to say that we should show appreciation for our fathers who, despite losing a war, imparted their high aspirations to us.

Taku Kajiwara, the former Governor of Gifu prefecture, said

"Dreams give rise to aspiration, which in turn leads to the motivation that inspires action, bringing about results. These results are the seeds from whence new dreams arise.(Mr. Taku Kajiwara, Governor of Gifu Prefecture)"

I have come to realize just how true that is.

It is well known that Kobe Kogyo, the precursor to Fujitsu Ten, was home to many talented engineers, among them Nobel Prize winner Leona Esaki, who, as a young employee, worked on receiving tubes, laying the groundwork for his development of tunnel diodes. Once the company became Fujitsu Ten, it turned its development efforts to car audio and automotive controls, recently becoming the world's first purveyor of AVN systems that combine audio and visual elements with navigation features. Fujitsu Ten has truly become an incubator for engineers. Together with this year's new employees, it is my sincere hope that we all work together to achieve our ambitions and turn our dreams into reality, ultimately creating new products and developing technologies that are compare favorably with predecessors.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Satoshi Nishida". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.