

はしがき

本書が紹介する 15 社のうちほとんどの企業は学生諸君にとってなじみがあるだけでなく、名前を聞いただけでその企業のブランドイメージが鮮明に浮かぶであろう。

ホンダといえば、創業者は本田宗一郎氏だが、本田氏の技術へのこだわりは 2 輪のオートバイから 4 輪自動車、さらに小型ジェット機へと受け継がれている。本田氏がオートバイを開発するに至った理由が、自転車に取り付ける小型エンジンの在庫がなくなったからだったということを知ると驚かされる。「クロネコヤマト」の愛称で親しまれている宅急便というサービスを考え、個人向けの宅配便を日本で最初に定着させたのは小倉昌男氏である。小倉氏もまた宅急便のヒントを極めて身近なところから得ている。さらには、今や国民のほとんどの人が知っている即席ラーメンを世界で初めて開発したのが日清食品の安藤百福氏だが、その安藤氏もまた即席ラーメン開発のヒントを自宅の台所で見出している。

これら 3 人の創業者をはじめ本書で扱った 15 人の業種は様々だが、共通しているのは、既成の概念を打ち破って国民や社会が真に望んでいるものを嗅覚鋭く探り当て、果てしない努力と忍耐、そして試行錯誤の末、独自のアイデアを商品化に導き成功させていることである。しかも成功した後も慢心せず、さらなる創意工夫によって改良・改善を続けている点も見逃せない。一人一人の成功への道程は、数多くの試練や挫折、そして光明のひらめきを伴っており、それぞれが個性豊かで読む者の心をつかんで離さない。その理由は、本書がそれぞれの創業者が自身の口で語った真実の話にもとづいているからである。

各章の最初のページでは、創業者が基礎を築いた企業の概況と英文で触れていない創業者に関するユニークなエピソードなどを紹介している。次に、800 語前後からなる英文で、各創業者の幼年期から青年期までの生い立ちや経験、創業者のものの考え方や創業分野を決める際に大きな影響を与えた出来事や人物、さらには創業者が手掛けた製品やサービスを開発し成功させるまでの話などを載せている。

英文は TOEIC に頻繁に出題される単語を多数配した上、読解能力の向上に不可欠な多様な構文を散りばめてある。練習問題も読解能力の向上に結びつくよう、内容の理解度を的確に測る問題と TOEIC によく出題される語彙に関する問題を設けた。

日本社会がこれまで経験したことがないほどの閉塞感に覆われている現在、日本人に最も求められているのはチャレンジ精神ではないだろうか。その意味で様々な分野で社会が求める商品やサービスを艱難辛苦の末、一から創り上げた創業者達のサクセス・ストーリーを読むことは我々に少なからぬ感動と勇気を与えてくれることと思う。

本書は主に日本経済新聞連載の「私の履歴書」を参考にし、15 社からのご協力のもと完成した。資料や写真を快くご提供いただき、ご多忙のなか問い合わせに応じていただいた各企業の皆さまに厚く御礼申し上げます。

著 者



Great Japanese Entrepreneurs 15 Successful Leaders in Business

Table of Contents

Unit 1 *Soichiro Honda* 本田宗一郎 1
本田技研工業株式会社

Unit 2 *Masao Ogura* 小倉昌男 7
ヤマトホールディングス株式会社

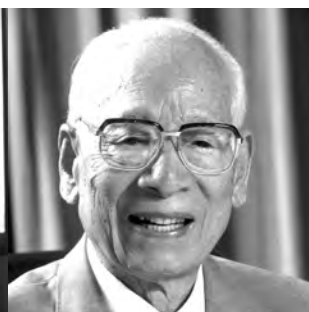
Unit 3 *Kazuo Inamori* 稲盛和夫 13
京セラ株式会社

Unit 4 *Tadao Yoshida* 吉田忠雄 19
YKK 株式会社

Unit 5 *Momofuku Ando* 安藤百福 25
日清食品ホールディングス株式会社

Unit 6 *Konosuke Matsushita* 松下幸之助 31
パナソニック株式会社

Unit 7 *Riichi Ezaki* 江崎利一 37
江崎グリコ株式会社





Unit 8 **Akio Morita** 盛田昭夫 43

ソニー株式会社

Unit 9 **Masataka Taketsuru** 竹鶴政孝 49

ニッカウヰスキー株式会社

Unit 10 **Koichi Tsukamoto** 塚本幸一 55

株式会社ワコールホールディングス

Unit 11 **Yoshiko Shinohara** 篠原欣子 61

テンプホールディングス株式会社

Unit 12 **Minoru Shirota** 代田 稔 67

株式会社ヤクルト本社

Unit 13 **Junzo Kashiwama** 榎山純三 73

株式会社オンワード榎山

Unit 14 **Minoru Yoneyama** 米山 稔 79

ヨネックス株式会社

Unit 15 **Makoto Iida** 飯田 亮 85

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Soichiro Honda

本田技研工業株式会社 Honda Motor Co., Ltd.



ホンダは現在、2輪オートバイの分野で他のメーカーの追随を許さないくらいの強い地位を確立し、4輪自動車では環境や安全性に十分配慮しつつ、個性が際立つような車作りを目指している。

さらに近年、小型ジェット機の分野にも進出しており、すでに多くの受注を獲得しているという。エンジンが自社製による開発で、機体も自社製というのは世界でも珍しいらしく、改めてホンダの技術力に驚かされる。



このような現在のホンダの礎を築いた本田宗一郎とはどのような人だったのか。技術屋というイメージが強いかもしれないが、経営者として備えるべき資質も兼ね備えていたのではないと思われる。終戦後ガソリン不足で自動車は使えず、汽車やバスなど交通機関も混雑がひどい中、小型エンジン付きモーターバイクなら売れるだろうと、世の中の需要を見抜いた鋭い読みが見事に的中する。

1959年、ロスアンゼルスにアメリカンホンダモーターカンパニーを設立した際、代理店との話し合いの中で売り上げ台数を相手側が年間台数と考えたが、本田氏は月間台数のつもりであったという。この強気の背景には、レジャーを目的とした輸送手段としてのアメリカ人の志向が、すでに自動車からオートバイに移っていることを本田氏が強く感じていたことが挙げられる。また、新製品のための設備投資をする前に、市場に出した時の反応をよく見極めたうえで一気に資本を投じるという考えも経営者として合理的な判断と言えよう。

本田宗一郎は技術屋の反面、豪放磊落な性格を表すようなエピソードの数々を自ら開陳している。他人に隙を見せるような雰囲気醸し出すことも経営者としての魅力なのかもしれない。おそらく社長として君臨していた期間、社員をはじめ一般大衆からも愛されていたのではないか。

The Honda logo is visible in streets all over the world. Soichiro Honda, founder of the world-famous company, was born in the Iwata District of Shizuoka Prefecture. Being the son of a blacksmith, Honda was familiar with metal and metal products from an early age.

Even before starting elementary school, he possessed a strong interest in machines and engines. Four kilometers from his home, there was a rice shop that used a machine for polishing rice. The youngster was attracted to the sounds of the machine and the smell of oil in the shop. Not far from the shop was a factory where logs were cut. There, he could not resist watching and listening to the saws as they cut the logs. Just watching machines in operation was enough to make him happy.

As he grew up, Honda longed to work in the car repair industry. So one day, he decided to write to a repair firm called Art & Company in the hope of being



accepted as an apprentice there. His heart leapt with joy when they offered him a position in Tokyo. Arriving in the capital, his heart was filled with a strong desire to work on cars, but the fact was that his sole responsibility was to take care of a baby. There was a big difference between the job to which he had aspired and the reality he faced.

Six months into the job, his boss asked him to help repair a car. This was Honda's first experience of fixing a car and he never forgot the deep emotion he felt. Then, to his relief, he began to do more repair work and spent less time with the baby. However, he later realized that taking care of the

logo 「ロゴタイプ (会社名などをマークのように表現したもの)」

blacksmith 「鍛冶屋」

could not resist 「～がたまらなく好きだった」

saws 「のこぎり」

apprentice 「見習い工」

baby for half a year had brought him tremendous benefits. He commented that in the long run there is no such thing as “waste” in one’s life. His words suggest that everything in life is a learning experience that has value.

5 At the age of 18, his boss gave him an assignment in Morioka to repair the engine of a fire truck. When he arrived at the fire station, the staff, including the head of the fire station, looked concerned about whether or not the young man could do the job properly. Over three days,
10 Honda worked diligently, taking the engine apart and repairing it. Everyone was surprised when the engine started up smoothly, and their worried expressions suddenly changed into those of respect. Returning to his accommodation, he found that his ordinary room had been
15 upgraded to the best one.

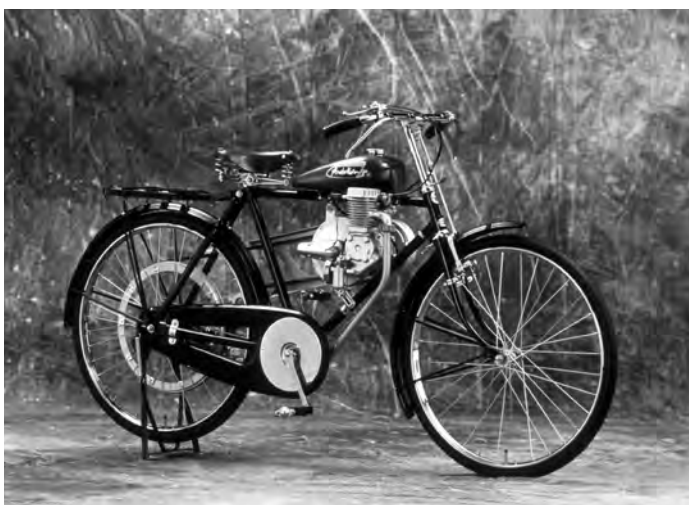
upgrade 「格上げをする」

Working at Art & Company for six years, Honda mastered how to build, repair, and drive cars. Then, at 22, he opened his own branch garage in Hamamatsu. Business was slow at first but he soon built up a reputation for being able to fix
20 cars that other garages could not. Car owners had spread the rumor that any car could be repaired at his particular garage.

Even though the garage had been doing well, he closed it after six years and established Tokaiseiki Inc. in order
25 to produce piston rings. This was a step forward — from repairing to manufacturing. However, the step was no easy task. He and a senior member of his staff, Mr. Miyamoto, often worked until midnight, and sometimes slept in the factory when they were extremely tired. With
30 over fifty employees but no products to sell, Honda used up most of his savings and even exchanged some of his wife’s possessions for money in order to keep the business running. It took nine months, but on November 20th, 1937 he finally succeeded in making a good piston ring. Then
35 disaster struck. In 1945, a huge earthquake in Hamamatsu destroyed his factory. At this point, he sold his company to

piston rings 「ピストンリング」

savings 「貯蓄」



Toyota Inc. for ¥450,000.

With money from the sale, Honda enjoyed himself, drinking *sake* and playing *shogi*. Then he hit upon a unique idea. Small engines had been used as parts of
 5 communications equipment during the war, and he could buy them cheaply. He purchased and attached these engines to bicycles and the “mopet” was born. This bicycle with an engine sold like hotcakes as public transport was crowded and not very reliable, and gasoline for cars was in short
 10 supply. In fact, it sold so well that the engines completely ran out of stock. However, as “Necessity is the mother of invention,” Honda made an engine on his own. His problem was solved and production of the mopet increased from a few hundred to one thousand a month.

15 This success prompted him to fulfill another of his dreams. In 1949, Honda built “Dream D,” the world’s first motorcycle with a 2-cycle (98cc) engine and its own body. Clearly, the power behind achieving this and his other dreams lay in Soichiro’s perseverance.

communications equipment 「通信機」

sold like hotcakes 「飛ぶように売れた」

not...reliable 「乗れるかどうかの保証もないし、発着の時間も当てにならない」

2-cycle engine 「2サイクルエンジン」

lay in 「～にかかっていた」

本文の内容に合うように、英文を完成させるのに適当なものや質問の答えを選びましょう。

1. The effect that machines had on Soichiro Honda as a child was _____.
 - a. to make him feel sick and unwell.
 - b. enough to attract him to saws.
 - c. to fill him with pleasure.
 - d. caused by the smell of bad oil.

2. Looking after a baby was a good experience for Honda because _____.
 - a. it was his dream job.
 - b. he learned something valuable.
 - c. he didn't like to repair cars with his boss.
 - d. it had caused him to lose his desire to work on cars.

3. In Morioka, the reason he received a better room was due to the fact that _____.
 - a. the head of the fire station was concerned about him.
 - b. he paid more money for an upgrade.
 - c. it was a surprise from his boss.
 - d. he had gained respect for doing a good job.

4. When he established Tokaiseiki Inc., _____.
 - a. Honda and Mr. Miyamoto slept in the factory to save money.
 - b. it made an immediate profit from sales of piston rings.
 - c. piston rings were much harder to make than Honda had thought.
 - d. Mr. Miyamoto was the only member of his staff.

5. Why was the mopet so popular?
 - a. Because trains, buses and cars could not be relied upon.
 - b. Because it was sold with hot cakes.
 - c. Because there was no shortage of engines for the bikes.
 - d. Because their engines allowed people to communicate with each other.

以下の空欄に当てはまる語を、a～dからそれぞれ選びましょう。

1. Our team is not _____ this kind of new marketing strategy.
a. familiar with b. similar to c. interesting in d. likely to
2. She hopes to join a law _____ after graduating from college in Chicago.
a. company b. industry c. office d. firm
3. The employees are basically content with a high salary and good _____.
a. profits b. payment c. benefits d. insurance
4. Such a big investment seems to be risky at the moment, but it will return a great profit _____.
a. in vain c. in the short term
b. in the long run d. in a row
5. The personnel manager was _____ some employees' poor performance ratings.
a. concerning with c. concerned about
b. worried of d. worry about
6. There are now _____ that the poor economy is improving.
a. signs b. images c. shows d. exhibitions
7. We are afraid that it will take longer to deliver the item to you as we are running _____ right now.
a. out of stock c. out of service
b. out of order d. out of question
8. Owing to rising interest in a healthy lifestyle, the number of people who have quit smoking has been rapidly _____ in major countries in the world.
a. decreasing b. improving c. increasing d. excluding