

The direction of the SS Japan (this section has been quoted from President Komaba's message.)

Prime Minister Suga, who has been unable to steer the SS Japan since last year, has resigned from his post, and Fumio Kishida, the former Chairman of the Policy Affairs Research Council, was appointed in his place on September 29th as a result of an internal leadership selection race within the ruling party. The SS Japan has been drifting without steerage for the past year under the direction of Captain Suga, although the main reason for his resignation has been attributed to the effects of the expanding COVID-19 pandemic, and we are all exhausted worrying over when we would be shipwrecked. I will now stand back and watch to see if the new Prime Minister is able to effectively take the helm and regain the trust of the people of Japan.

The number of people infected with the novel coronavirus is at last decreasing after peaking at 25,000 on August 25th, when a state of emergency was instituted for twenty-one prefectures, with numbers dropping to less than 2,000 people per day since September 20th.

There are naturally many opinions as to the reason for this, but the greatest reason appears to be an acceleration in the vaccination program, which grew by 17% within a single month for people receiving their second vaccination, from 41.2% of the population at the end of August to 58.0% as of September 28th. The government cancelled the state of emergency from September 30th, although I get the feeling that we should have continued this for a little longer.

Hospital bed occupancy for COVID-19 patients stands at an average of 30%, although certain regions are recording more than 50% occupancy, and more than 30,000 people nationwide are quarantined at home. The people who managed to recover during home quarantine have all stated that they experienced severe coughing, difficulty breathing, almost losing consciousness, and blood oxygen saturation levels of around 90%, as well as repeatedly calling the COVID emergency contact number and being told that there were no hospital beds available because there were people in worse condition than themselves. These people were forced to quarantine at home without being hospitalized and spent many sleepless nights fearing death, and they are all both physically and mentally exhausted. There are also people who have not regained their sense of taste, etc., and the possibility remains of people who have received two shots of the vaccine being infected by the Delta variant, which has no limits to the damage it can cause, so for this reason I believe that (in my personal opinion) the state of emergency should be continued to

Automotive area (Europe's largest Motor Show, COVID-19 countermeasures, and similarities in the shift across to Evs)

"I want this year's Motor Show to be an in-person event." The Munich International Motor Show, Europe's largest automotive fair, was held in Germany from September 6th. I spoke to an acquaintance involved in public relations for the organizing committee in April, and despite the fact that leaving and arriving in Europe was still restricted at that time due to the spread of COVID-19, he spoke of his desire to make it an in-person event. Travel restrictions were relaxed in the summer, and the large-scale event was able to be held on an in-person basis.

It has been speculated that the reason for insisting on an in-person event was because holding Europe's largest trade fair was supposed to symbolize the fact that the economy was back on the rails. Another reason was apparently due to the fact that Germany's international motor show represented a turning point as it was transferred to Munich from Frankfurt for the first time in seventy years. In addition, it was also hoped that the event would provide a forum for emphasizing the appeal of new electric vehicle (EV) models. The European Commission has proposed that sales of all new gas-engine vehicles be banned in the year 2035, and the shift across to EVs is accelerating. Local sales of EVs are also on the increase, and European manufacturers are frantically scrambling for a part of this new market.

Having entered 2021, European manufactures are announcing their strategies for shifting across to EVs in quick succession. However, most of these have been announced online, and there have been very few opportunities for engaging in real communications through other mediums. Holding the show has enabled them to reveal the actual vehicles, thereby providing visitors with the chance to touch them and sit in them. The festivities were launched by Daimler of Germany. They hosted a pre-event party the day

before on press day, at which they revealed all of their new EV models. Daimler's luxury car division, Mercedes Benz, has already indicated that it may specialize in EV cars by 2030. President Ola Kallenius has continually repeated his famous phrase, "From EVs first to EVs only." The company has placed the priority on the new EQE model. Its lineup of gas-engine vehicles includes the luxury S class and the E class. The EV equivalent of the S class has already been released on sale as the EQS, and an EV version of the E class was announced at the motor show. The front is low-slung like a sports car, and it left an impression of being different to the conventional E class. A single battery charge will provide a maximum traveling distance of 660km when the battery capacity is at 90 kilowatts.

The G class has a square design and has many fans throughout the world, and it is also very popular among celebrities, etc., in Japan.

This square design has been inherited by the EQG. Although no details were provided, the presentation video emphasized the fact that it provided an off-road style of driving and was capable of climbing steep unpaved inclines. The scenes inside the show site were typical of the COVID crisis. Although the managers removed their facemasks during presentations, they wore them in the same way as all visitors when they were out on the floor. All of the visitors wore facemasks as they surrounded President Kallenius. There were various opportunities to stand and chat, but the masks made it difficult to hear what people were

Source: Nikkei Business



Keihin Seimitsu Kogyo (Customer operations and plans for recovery)

We have received information to say that customer plants will remain offline during October after shutdowns in September due to COVID-19, a lockdown in Vietnam, a fire in an Asian company, and other issues, but despite this, we have also received several plans for recovery lasting from November through to March.

Our customers have been experiencing drastic breakdowns in the balance of supply against demand, and the sense of urgency that is apparent to ensure that the supply and demand balance is restored as soon as possible is clear from these plans.

There are many models that won't be able to be delivered until next spring despite the fact that our customers, who are automobile manufacturers, have already received orders from consumers for both passenger cars and commercial vehicles, and, in particular, popular models will take more than one year to deliver.

Although KSK is also facing difficulties with regard to production, we have been able to cover deficiencies caused by customer plants shutting down with partial production and components that are in stock, and we are moving ahead under the understanding that we will be able to get through this period (for customer orders).

Post-editorial Notes: (Thoughts on the Paralympics)

“Don't worry about what you have lost. Just make the most of what you have left.”

This is a quote by Dr. Ludwig Guttmann, who is known as the “Father of the Paralympics,” and it is said to sum up the spirit of the Paralympics. It is said that the start of the Paralympics was advocated by Dr. Ludwig Guttmann in 1948, and the first event was an archery tournament held at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, London. They were launched as a form of rehabilitation for soldiers who had received mainly spinal injuries during World War II, and this later turned into an international tournament (1952), and was then expanded into a larger event held after the Olympic Games from the Seoul Games in 1988. This year's Tokyo Paralympics were held between August 24th (Tuesday) and September 5th (Sunday), and I'm sure the shock that the athletes experienced when they first received or realized that they had congenital or acquired disabilities was unimaginable. Despite this, they all overcame these difficulties to take part in the Games, which included many extremely moving situations displaying the amazing smiling faces of the athletes who had gone on to win medals and the athletes who lost but gave their best. An example of this was the blind athlete taking part in the 100m track final for the blind and the visually impaired who sat down on the course and cried when the tether connected to the guide, who ran together with her due to total blindness, broke. This wouldn't have happened if only she could see... She must have experienced a rage that nobody else could... Seeing this caused the corners of my eyes to heat up.

Throwing oneself wholeheartedly into something and having to accept the results of the game (regardless of whether the scream that builds up from inside is caused by regret or delight) while the tears flow naturally is something that I have experienced many times as I battled through my school life, and nothing can replace the pure and refreshing emotions that flow through one at that time.

Although this may sound strange coming from somebody who enjoys full physical health, watching the Paralympics reminded me of a song by Yumi Arai that I used to like, which goes “Someday time will be a generous friend, who will turn the past yesterday into a story.” We humans have been gifted with amazing functions, and even when things are so bad that we wish for death, there comes a time when we can forget the pain and observe ourselves objectively and say, “Oh yes, I remember that time, but someday I will be able to laugh it off and talk about it.” This thought process has helped me out countless times in the past. I have been through the mill many times, such as failing at junior high and seeing my father weep as a result of this, losing my father when I was in high school, and being at risk of a fail mark at university, but I am now able to dine out on these stories to raise a smile in others.

In particular, I have a nostalgic feeling for the time that I was at risk of a fail mark → I opened my 1st year report and saw “Repeat Year.” What on earth...? I took another look again and concentrated on the word “repeat”... Repeat? A fail mark?... The credit column for one subject was blank... I went straight to my teacher's home... He showed me my exam paper, and not only was the column for writing the student's name blank, the marks received were only 5 out of 100 → As I hung my head in shame, the

teacher turned to me and said, "You didn't pass, but I guess that means that you will fail... But, didn't you represent the school at the Athletic Tournament?... Right, I've made my decision! Out of respect for you actually having the courage to come to my home, I'll give you a pass mark! Only this once, though! (lol)"

→ Having received a special credit, I returned to my room and shared three "banzai" cheers with my colleagues while we all laughed out loud... It was a great era, I had a great teacher, and it was a great university... When I think back on this... the memory warms the cockles of my heart.

I hope to continue creating as many warm memories that I can laugh at and talk about from the start as possible for the rest of my life.