

**Aftermath of the Fukushima No.1 Power Plant Roadmap (this section has been quoted from President Komaba's message.)**

I visited Tokyo Electric Power Co., Inc. in April 2018 to learn about the response being made to decommission the Fukushima No.1 Power Plant, and I remember as if it was only yesterday the unassuming and earnest way that the people in TEPCO started my visit by apologizing profusely for the trouble they had caused the people of Japan, and the impression I received in seeing the hard work they were putting into the difficult job ahead.

At that time, the first phase in the roadmap for decommissioning the plant was to start removing the spent fuel in January 2013, the second phase involved removing the fuel debris in December 2021, and the third phase was to complete the decommissioning process between 2041 and 2051.

Reports on four areas of progress were given during the **98th Meeting of the Secretariat of the Decommissioning & Water Decontamination Team** held on January 27th, 2022. These were, (1) The large cover for the No.1 reactor containing spent fuel will be installed by 2023 and the removal of the spent fuel is scheduled to be completed by 2028, and for the No.2 reactor, an assembly base for removing the fuel is currently under construction, and the removal of the fuel is scheduled to be completed by 2026 (fuel has already been removed from the No.3 and No.4 reactors). (2) Surveys of fuel debris inside the nuclear reactors are being implemented, but the start of fuel extraction has been delayed by one year due to the effects of COVID-19 (scheduled to start from December 2022). (3) Contaminated water has been reduced by 80% in the ocean, the landside water barrier and the sub-drains in comparison to prior to the start of decontamination measures, and the water is being stored after multi-nuclide removal treatment. (4) Debris (790,000 cubic meters in 10 years) has been incinerated, processed to reduce mass and melt-treated, and following this, 260,000 cubic meters was placed in a building for storage purposes. The points worth noting about this document is that, in addition to the previously-mentioned four points, the same level of importance is being placed on the continuation of a wide range of improvements, including to the environments where people work, the environments where the workers eat and live, and the office environments, etc.

When checking out the progress of the roadmap, I can't help but think back on the enormous efforts everyone put in at the time of the disaster, and observing the efforts they continue to make by releasing accurate information every month, as they face around thirty years of continuing to sort out this negative legacy that produces no benefits, generates a sense of empathy within me, regardless of their stance on the matter of refusing to allow nuclear power plants to be restarted ever again.

**Automotive area (Start of light-vehicle versions of EV, the "Car of the People": Mitsubishi Motors leads the vanguard at the two-million yen mark)**

Mitsubishi Motors will sell light-vehicle versions of electric vehicles (EVs) as early as the beginning of fiscal 2022. It will keep the effective price down to two-million yen with the use of the purchasing subsidies provided by the government. All major manufacturers are expected to enter the light EV market by around 2025. Light vehicles are widely used due to their easy-handling and low-mileage advantages and they are known as the "car of the people" while accounting for approximately forty percent of all new vehicles sold in Japan, and this sounds the starting pistol for the shift across to EVs for light vehicles. Mitsubishi announced the light EV K-EV concept X Style concept car at the Tokyo Auto Salon 2022 car exhibition held in the middle of January. The investment company NMKV (Minato, Tokyo) set up jointly by Mitsubishi Motors and Nissan Motors, in which Nissan has a thirty-four percent stake, is in charge of the project. The cars will be manufactured at Mitsubishi's Mizushima Plant (Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture). Mitsubishi mass-produced the i-MiEV, the first manufacturer in the world to mass-produce EV cars, between 2009 and the end of March 2021, but sales remained stagnant from its debut, with a total of 24,000 units sold. Mitsubishi is now trying its hand at light EVs just one year since production of this vehicle was terminated. Takao Kato, president and CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of Mitsubishi is quoted as saying, "The body of

light vehicles is very light and there are many people who use them as town runabouts. This means that they can be made with smaller battery capacities, which helps keep the cost down,” pointing out the rationality of combining light vehicles and EVs under Japan’s unique motor vehicle standards.

According to statistics on new vehicle sales released by the Japan Automobile Dealers Association, etc., approximately 4.45 million vehicles were sold between January and December in 2021. Of this figure, light vehicles accounted for approximately 1.65 million units, or thirty-seven percent. Whether or not consumers will accept this shift across to EVs is an issue likely to effect the shift for the entire automobile market in Japan.

A new EV model released on sale at the beginning of 2022 has more compact batteries with a capacity of 20kw, which is a capacity increase of twenty-five percent over the i-MiEV. This provides a traveling distance of 170km on a full charge. The cost of this vehicle is being kept down by making the most effective use of a system in which components that are shared with the Leaf EV model, sold by Nissan, are purchased.

Other light vehicle manufacturers will enter the EV market in the future and seek to catch up with Mitsubishi. Nissan is expected to announce the release of the Nissan version of the new Mitsubishi light EV during fiscal 2022. Daihatsu Motor's president Soichiro Okudaira declared in December 2021 that, “Sales of one million light EVs will be achieved by 2025.” All automobiles sold by 2030 will be electric vehicles, including hybrid vehicles (HVs). Suzuki is also planning on selling one million light EVs by 2025. Honda, the frontrunner in the light vehicle market with its N-BOX, is scheduled to release a light EV onto the market in 2024.



Source: Nikkei Business

### **Keihin Seimitsu Kogyo (Launch of a Kaizen activity database)**

We have created a database containing various hints, methods of proceeding and results outlining the history of our Kaizen activities and suggestions that have been accumulated up until now.

All employees will be provided with indirect access to the data, and all executives will have direct access. The objectives of this include establishing transparency with regard to the work being carried out by all departments, and creating a foundation that improves the skills of all employees.

The data involved is all small group Kaizen activities (themes from the entire company selected during the Kaizen Conference), and all ideas that received awards for imaginative and inventive Kaizen activities. The reason behind this is to enable all of the various Kaizen suggestions and imaginative and inventive ideas carried out by each department and factory up until now to be easily accessed from PCs, and to create a foundation in which employees can use the data as reference material for their own Kaizen activities.

Although it depends on when the COVID-19 pandemic will come to an end, we hope that this database will grow progressively larger over time as we resume small group activities and continue with our imaginative and inventive Kaizen activities, and that it acts as a powerful pilot in navigating the course of future activities.

### **Post-editorial Notes: (Home is Where You Make It)**

February involved several mini business trips for me, which meant that I spent every weekend throughout the month staying in different locations, consisting of a hotel near the head office on the first week, at home on the second week, at a hotel in Hokkaido on the third week, and a stay at the Kanuma dormitory on the fourth week.

Dinner while staying at the hotel near the head office was the Nagoya specialty produced by Kibun Foods known as “Akakara Oden” (assortment of oden ingredients in a miso-based soup) and Japanese sake. I boiled hot water in the hotel and then added chives and mushrooms to the oden ingredients and allowed it to simmer. Once the soup had soaked into the ingredients, I stuffed the mushrooms and oden into my

mouth and washed them down with a gulp of sake. The flavor of the spicy miso was delicious! Nothing soaks through the cells of the body quite like this during the cold season. Feeling thirsty, I moved onto beer, and it was around then that my deteriorating brain told me that I was hungry. I visited a local convenience store and bought a hotdog and an éclair and ate them while chugging wine as a substitute for beer until I finally fell dizzily into bed. I woke in the middle of the night with a pain in my head and my buttocks... Apparently, I had fallen over when I visited the bathroom... I immediately regretted drinking too much.

After working up a sweat at the gym on the second week, I visited the Kokuya Chinese restaurant in the town of Fujisawa amid beautiful weather. I faithfully reenacted directions from Mr. H in the sales department for "covering the gyoza meat dumplings with lots of pepper and then eating them together with vinegar" → The beer quenching my parched throat and the gyoza were absolutely amazing. Feeling slightly tipsy, I walked alongside the Enoden railway by the Katase coast, where I realized once again what a lovely town Enoshima was.

I flew to Hokkaido from Haneda on an ANA flight. It was my first visit to an airport and my first flight in two years, so I was rather excited and felt a little nostalgic. On Saturday, I worked up a sweat at the Iwamizawa gym and then returned to the hotel and enjoyed a daytime beer in my room. I cracked open the push-pull tag and chugged. Delicious...! I reveled in a slightly tipsy frame of mind throughout the afternoon until dinnertime.

At Kanuma, I went jogging before lunch. I left the dormitory under warm sunshine and took a long detour along the outer circuit of the Niregi Road via a nearby station (Momiyama), and after a journey lasting around ninety minutes, I returned to the hotel for a shower before lunch. For lunch I ordered a bottle of beer and spicy chive soba noodles at a noodle restaurant, and the way in which the spiciness brought out the flavor of the meat miso was absolutely amazing. I quenched my thirst with beer, which went down smoothly, and finished off with chive noodles until my belly was full. With a full stomach, I headed off in the direction of Kobodai... There were very few people walking around Kanuma and so nobody was inconvenienced when I sang out loud to the popular songs playing back on YouTube, and contrary to the Kamakura and Fujisawa areas, I was able to release my stress with this substitute for karaoke without having to worry about the stares of other people, which enabled me to walk a total of 30,000 steps that day.

Although I sometimes make mistakes, I get the feeling that spending time drinking during the day (and at night) on weekends provides me with irreplaceable periods of time.

A lot of people experience residence postings, living apart from their families due to work commitments and long/short business trips, and I myself have experienced all of these in various forms. Alcohol as a constant companion provides us with a sense of diversion amid the loneliness of being away from our families. (Sorry, liver!)

It is my intention to continue through life with alcohol as a close companion under the concept of "Home is Where You Make It."

(I'm convinced that alcohol is a necessary part of life... My apologies to people who don't drink or can't drink...)