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Article :

OBITUARY | Shoichiro Toyoda: An Outstanding Leader Who Made Toyota a Global Success

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

By the end of his tenure, Shoichiro Toyoda had transformed Toyota Motor Corporation into a global automaker. It is now the biggest company in Japan.

Shoichiro Toyoda, honorary chairman and former president of Toyota Motor Corporation, [died of](#) heart failure on February 14 at the age of 97. Under his leadership, Toyota grew into a global automotive giant. His grandfather was Sakichi Toyoda, the founder of Toyota Group.

After studying engineering at Nagoya University and completing his PhD at Tohoku University, Mr Toyoda joined the Toyota Motor Company Ltd in 1952. Then, in 1981, he became president of Toyota Motor Sales. The following year, Toyota Motor Sales and Toyota Motor Company Ltd merged to form Toyota Motor Corporation, of which he became the first president.

He specialized in mechanical engineering and received the Deming Prize for his work as the head of Toyota's quality control management. In 2007, he became the seventh Japanese to be inducted into the US Automotive Hall of Fame. The museum honors individuals who have made [significant](#) contributions to the automotive industry.

The funeral service will be held with close family members only. Mr Toyoda's eldest son Akio Toyoda, who is the current president of Toyota Motor Corporation, will be the chief mourner.

A Centripetal Force

Mr Toyoda was the centripetal force of the Toyota Group. He [laid](#) the [groundwork for](#) Toyota to become the world's number-one automobile manufacturer. He also demonstrated outstanding leadership as chairman of the Keidanren.

After becoming the first president of Toyota Motor Corporation in 1982, he paved the way for production in the United States through a joint venture with General Motors in 1984.

Later on, Mr Toyoda [became](#) more [involved in](#) big business associations. He was keenly aware that the company needed a strategy for the global implementation of Toyota's Kanban Method, a lean manufacturing system that contributed significantly to the company's success. Furthermore, he had to deal with the Japan-US trade friction. For that, he promoted greater coordination both within and outside the industry.

A Changemaker Who Loved Japan

Until then, Toyota had restricted its operations to Aichi Prefecture, showing no interest in business activities outside the Chūkyō metropolitan area. The automaker's conservatism was called the "Mikawa Monroe Doctrine" by some. Mikawa is the name of an old province that now forms the eastern half of Aichi Prefecture.

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Mr Toyoda became the first person from Toyota to chair Keidanren. During his tenure, he reiterated the importance of structural and regulatory reform. In 1996, Mr Toyoda announced his long-term vision: "the creation of an attractive Japan."

The vision incorporated Mr Toyoda's desire to reform Japan into a country where young people have hope for the future — a place where people from around the world would come to establish a life, start a business, and study.

After his eldest son Akio became Toyota's president in 2009, Mr Toyoda continued to be [attentive](#) to the company's progress. A reporter recalls that Mr Toyoda once asked him about Akio's reputation. It was clear that Mr Toyoda cared deeply about Akio's work.

Many will remember the time when Mr Toyoda watched judo at the 2004 Athens Olympics. He was cheering for judoka Ryoko Tani, who was a former employee of Toyota. When she won the gold medal, he jumped up, overwhelmed with joy.

2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **die of** ～ ～が原因・もとで死亡する、（植物が）～が原因で枯れる
 - ・ It is said that one in four Japanese people **die of** cancer.
2. **significant** 重要な、意義深い、大きな影響を与える、大幅な、かなりの
 - ・ We just experienced a **significant** first step in the history.
3. **lay groundwork for** ～ ～の基礎作り・下準備をする、～の根回しをする
 - ・ Our company is working on **laying** the **groundwork for** market development.
4. **become involved in** ～ ～に関わる・関与するようになる、～に巻き込まれ始める
 - ・ He tried to stay away from trouble, but he **became involved in** the political scandal.
5. **attentive** 注意を払っている、用心深い、油断しない、よく気が付く、（人に対して）思いやりを持つ
 - ・ You need to be accurate and **attentive** to details.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How was Toyota Motor Corporation formed?
2. What was his vision for Japan to make it an attractive country?
3. What make of car do you drive? If you don't own one, is there any particular type of car you want to drive?
4. Do you know any other person who influenced Japan's economy?

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日本語関連記事：豊田章一郎氏死去 世界のトヨタへ卓越した指導力

トヨタ自動車名誉会長で、経団連会長を務めた豊田章一郎（とよだ・しょういちろう）氏が2月14日、心不全のため死去した。97歳だった。葬儀・告別式は近親者で執り行う。喪主は長男で、トヨタ社長の豊田章男氏。豊田章一郎氏はトヨタ自動車創業者の豊田佐吉氏の孫。

名古屋大工学部を卒業し、東北大学の大学院を修了。昭和27年にトヨタ自動車工業（当時）に入社。56年にトヨタ自販の社長に就任し、57年トヨタ自工との「工販合併」を受けて、初代トヨタ自動車社長に就任した。機械工学を専攻した技術者で、トヨタの品質管理責任者としてデミング賞を受賞するなどの功績を残したほか、平成19年には自動車産業に功績を残した人物を顕彰する米国自動車殿堂に、日本人では7人目の殿堂入りを果たした。

グループの求心力

豊田章一郎氏は、トヨタ自動車グループの求心力の象徴だ。本格的な海外展開や、トヨタを世界ナンバーワンの自動車メーカーに押し上げるための土台づくりを担い、経団連会長としても卓越した指導力を発揮した。

昭和57年、トヨタ自動車工業とトヨタ自動車販売の合併によって誕生したトヨタ自動車の初代代表取締役社長に就任。59年には米ゼネラル・モーターズ（GM）との合併で、米国での現地生産を進めた。トヨタの競争力の源泉ともなっている「かんぱん方式」を海外に広げる世界戦略を展開することや、日米自動車摩擦に対応するために、対外・対内の調整の必要性を痛感していたとされ、財界活動にも力を入れるようになった。

それまでトヨタは愛知県にこもる「三河モンロー主義」ともいわれ、中京圏以外の財界活動には興味を示してこなかったが、豊田氏がトヨタ出身者としては、初めて経団連会長に就任した。

経団連会長としては構造改革の必要性を強調し、規制改革の重要性を繰り返し訴えた。平成8年には長期ビジョン「魅力ある日本一創造への責任」を発表。「若者が未来に希望を持ち、世界の人々が日本に住んでみたい、日本でビジネスをしてみたい、日本で学びたい」と考えるような日本に改革したいという豊田氏の想いが盛り込まれた。

21年に長男、章男氏がトヨタ社長に就任して以降はその動向にも思いを寄せていた。かつてトヨタを担当していた記者は、ある会合で豊田氏とあいさつしたが、その際も、「最近の章男の評判はどうなんだ」と聞かれ、気にかけていることを実感したという。

16年のアテネ五輪では、柔道の会場で一般の観客席で、トヨタの社員であった谷亮子選手（当時）の応援に駆けつけた。大きな声で谷選手を応援し、金メダル獲得した際には、飛び上がって喜んでいた姿が懐かしい。

出典：豊田章一郎氏死去 世界のトヨタへ卓越した指導力

[JAPAN Forward](#)