

100 Next-Era CEOs IN ASIA 2010

— The region's best, brightest, promising —



Shinko Plastics Co. CEO & President **Hiroshi Kodama**

Year of birth 1965

Birthplace Tokyo/Japan

Message to young people

Previously, Japan held an overwhelmingly strong position in Asia. But with the growth of neighboring countries like China, which surpassed Japan in GDP in the second quarter of 2010, Japan is losing its dominance, now becoming just one of the other countries in Asia. In this new environment, the key is whether the young people in Japan will be able to build up a new position for Japan in Asia. Let's work together for it.



When I was a child, I had asthma. To overcome it, I joined a local baseball team. When I was in elementary school, I read an article about "sun-tanned, brilliant students." It was a series of stories that reported about high school students studying hard while playing on the baseball team, which impressed me a lot. So when I entered my high school, I joined a baseball club. Then I had fulfilling days in university.

Any failure and suffering would be invaluable lessons for the future. To promote people's autonomy, it is important not to give a lot of instructions but to give them a chance to think for themselves.

After graduating from a university, I joined a major insurance company. Six and a half years of experience there helped me to run the current company. I was assigned the task to allocate the companywide budget, worth about 100 billion yen, which was a serious responsibility as I was still young. But through that experience, I could understand how the company actually works for just a short time of period. At the same time, I was responsible for the auditing of affiliated companies, which also helped me learn about management. Later on, I moved to the current company. Two things I value the most here is the focus on human beings and the hands-on approach, going to a site to get firsthand knowledge.

If one is put in a higher and tough position, that person will try to grow to fit into that position. Getting trust from people is the first thing and then theory comes next. People tend to delay making decisions if they are only sitting at their desk. Going to a site and understanding actual needs are crucial.

Since I was a vice president before I became the president, I was ready to assume the post. But I came to realize the new responsibilities as a president. I always believe in my staff and have high expectations for them. In response, they try to meet my expectations, too. My struggles as a president are greatly eased by my staff.

A company must survive by adapting to drastic changes in the world. Even if it succeeds once in a point in time, it must never stop running. This year, our company celebrates the 115th anniversary of its foundation. I hope we continue to serve society. The important thing is to keep challenging what is taken for granted in a speedy manner. Fortunately, our core business, plastics, has infinite potentials to grow, so that we will have a role to play. We also strive to compete with rivals in the emerging Asian countries. This is like an endless marathon, but I will keep running while adapting to upcoming changes.