

Special contribution

Specialty of Japan

I wish you a Very Happy New Year. Today, it is said that the Japanese economy is in a recovering step under the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic growth policy, which brings monetary easing, lower yen and bullish stock market.

It surely has an effect for major exporters, big automobile producers and others. However, we, smaller businesses, don't improve yet without benefit of Abe's economic policy. The lower yen has brought us various swelling costs, higher aluminum alloy, electric power, gas, oil and the like.

Furthermore our customers continuously request more severe qualities which bring us some increase of wage or some new investments, and it is hard to price up of our products within a severe international competition. We have to wait some time until Abe's economic policy reaches to all of us.

Fortunately, we, diecasters, keep a great technology integrated during past long years, and hold various excellent know-how in our job. I believe that it is important to produce the high quality products which have value added and specialty made in Japan.

We don't aim to be "number one business" but have to be "only one business". I think this is the only one way to stop "hollowed Japan". I hope everyone at diecast business will be in good health and enjoy excellent business results in New Year.

Seisuke Matso

Chairman, Middle Japan Diecasters

Cooperative Association

President, Toa Diecast Industry, Ltd.

The 30th New Year Praying Meeting Opens

In the afternoon of January 17, the 80 delegates from scrap suppliers and transporters were invited at the Kira Kanko Hotel in Mikawa Bay National Park. Keeping custom, Chairman, Hisashi Amano addressed "New Year random talk" for one hour as the above photo on page two shows

Then, the attendants visited Kannon Temple on the top of Mt. Sangane by bus, and the praying meeting was held solemnly for business prosperity and traffic safety New Year. The priest lighted a big sacred fire invocation and chanted a sutra in a loud voice.

He read up each attendant's name and address with praying to get rid of seven misfortunes and to invite seven fortunes this year. Everyone had a great belief that New Year will be undoubtedly prosperous.

The bird's eye view from the top of Mt. Sangane was really wonderful and impressive reflected by the golden sunset at Mikawa Bay.

At the hotel in the evening, a grand New Year party was held in traditional Japanese fashion and everyone enjoyed thoroughly themselves till midnight. The photo on page two is President, Takashi Amano's opening address at the grand New Year party.

Chairman, Hisashi Amano's address is summarized on the reverse page.

Reform plan of English study

In December, the Ministry of Education and Science revealed a reform plan on English study from elementary to high school to bolster English study from the 2018 academic year. According to the execution plan of English education, English will be taught from third grade in activity-oriented classes once or twice a week mainly instructed by home room teacher to lay the foundation for communication skills

By the time students reach fifth and sixth grades, English will be an official subject conducted three times a week by qualified home room teachers or specialized language instructors with a focus on fostering elementary command of English. Since 2002 academic year the English study at elementary schools has been discretionary.

Experts express mixed views on this scheduled official plan. Most insist the shortage of both skillful teachers and learning hours to gain enough English skills.

Aim of English study

Mr. Shimomura, the Minister of Education and Science, says “ The goal of English education must be to foster talents who can respond to globalization”. Though we can see the words “internationalization” or “globalization” easily every day, I can’t find out these words in Kenkyusha’s New English-Japanese Dictionary 1979, one of the biggest and the most popular dictionaries in Japan, and also I can’t understand what they mean at all. I presume both words were made in Japan and don’t have exact meaning themselves.

I think our goal of English study in schools has been only for the success of entrance examinations. The goal in junior high schools aims to the success of high schools’ entrance exams, and that in high schools aims to the success of universities’ entrance exams.

Furthermore, it is very famous that the entrance exams of English are dry and impractical for marking by computer. If I should be an examiner, the problems would be free compositions “My teacher” for high school applicants, and “Abe’s Yasukuni visit” for university applicants. I am afraid some papers would be blank.

Need Japanese English?

When Japanese live in a normal life in Japan, we don’t need English at all, and I think it is better that Japanese forget a delusion that all Japanese have to command of English.

In junior high school and high school, it is the best way that English is a discretionary subject, and furthermore, I think it better that if students can select various foreign languages, English, Chinese, Korean, Malaysian, Thai and the like for their club activities. Beyond expectation, the skill may go up effectively rather than today’s mandatory lesson.

It is a great waste of time and energy that all Japanese study English in schools as an official subject, and on the other hand, the students who want to major English have to study with far more hours and far higher quality in schools, I believe.

Company news Mr. Fumio Hoshino, Kosan Metals, was awarded a memorial gift for perfect 30 attendances of Praying Meeting as the photo on page four shows.