

Kaizen Convention qualifying rounds and the Novel Coronavirus (this section has been quoted from President Komaba's message.)

The qualifying rounds for the Kaizen Convention have been held.

It was tough making the selections as we were faced with a wide range of exceptional achievements, including from a team of women who used their perspective to isolate unnecessary burdens and make improvements to lathe work, welding and assembly, a team that came up with a mechanism for achieving zero shaving remnants, and an interdepartmental team that eradicated seven areas of waste, but we finally narrowed it down to nine teams who displayed amazing levels of determination. We are now thinking of implementing various types of innovations to revitalize Kaizen activities even further in the future, so we look forward to your continued guidance and support.

The coronavirus that erupted from the city of Wuhan, China, is now fiercely rampant in Italy, Iran, South Korea and other nations, and as of 10:30 on March 8th, the virus continues to spread around Japan, with 1,159 infected victims (696 from a cruise ship), 14 fatalities and 311 infected patients who have been released from hospital announced.

The government announced a range of measures **to suppress the speed of contagion and to reduce serious infections and fatalities as much as possible** on February 24th, including the suspension of various events and the closure of elementary, junior high and high schools. It is said that the two-week period from February 24th will be the crucial period.

As far as KSK is concerned, we have established eight daily control policies, including various contagion prevention measures and prohibiting movement between factories and visits to customer premises, six policies for responding to victims in the event of infection, detailed responses to people who complain of fevers in all offices, fourteen-day home quarantine periods for people who have been traveling, and many other such policies, all of which took effect from February 23rd.

We extend our deepest condolences to all of the people who have died as a result of this disease, and pray that we are able to stop it from spreading further.

Automotive area (Tesla dismantled to discover the source of its strength)

How good is US Tesla's technology? We purchased and dismantled Tesla's mass-produced Model 3 to answer this question. The most surprising point to come out of this electric vehicle (EV) with a production plan consisting of 500,000 units per year was the integrated ECU (Electronic Control Unit) that controls not only autonomous driving, but also the entire vehicle. Weighing less than 3kg, this "brain" is not only the source of Tesla's strength, it also has the ability to change the part supply chain for the entire automotive industry. A technician from a domestic automobile manufacturer raised the white flag after seeing the computer mounted on the Tesla and said, "We could never do this". The Model 3 and Model S mass-produced by Tesla are mounted with a computer known as the HW3.0 (Fig.1). The company developed their own semi-conductors, and the ECU (Electronic Control Unit) plays the role of integrating all autonomous driving, infotainment and other functions. The architecture consists of a high-performance computer as the hub of the vehicle-mounted electronic platform, which is known as a "centralized" system. People representing the automotive industry were unanimous in their opinion that this would not be possible until 2025. Despite this, Tesla introduced the HW3.0 in the spring of 2019. In other words, it is leading the rest of the industry by more than six years.

The reason why the afore-mentioned technicians said that this could not be done has nothing to do with a lack of development skills. There is no way that major automobile manufacturers with high-level workers and enormous research and development budgets could not achieve this. Despite this, automobile manufacturers achieving this by or after 2025 is consequently too late. The main reason for this is ties of obligation, which is an area in which the emerging force of Tesla can exploit its strengths. The real reason why conventional automobile manufacturers cannot modify their vehicle-mounted electronic platforms is because this would result in them draining work away from part manufacturers. Establishing centralized systems would result in a dramatic reduction in ECU numbers. This is a life and death issue for part manufacturers, who have monopolized the shipment of enormous volumes of ECUs, and automobile manufacturers have no choice but to step softly around this.

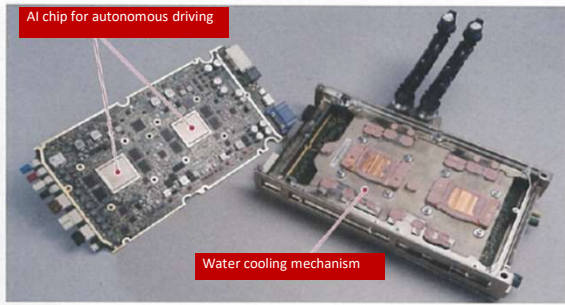


Fig.1. HW3.0 Integrated ECU (Electronic Control Unit) mounted onto Model 3

Tesla, on the other hand, has no such ties of obligation and is able to select and concentrate on the ideals it pursues. Tesla was the first to sense the requirements of consumers with regard to autonomous driving and connected cars, and therefore continued to concentrate on developing vehicular systems that would satisfy these requirements. In fact, the Tesla Model 3 that the editorial department dismantled contained only a few ECUs, including the integrated ECU.

Source: Nikkei Automotive

Keihin Seimitsu Kogyo (Kaizen Convention qualifying rounds)

KSK held the qualifying rounds for the Kaizen Convention in the middle of February. A total of nine team circles were selected for this year's convention. All teams are now busy preparing in the hope that they will achieve victory at the convention, which is scheduled to be held on July 4th (Saturday).

* Apologies for the lack of topics caused by few visitors to the company and few events being held in order to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Post-editorial Notes: (A short break)

I took a few days' vacation, and visited the island of Kauai in Hawaii with all members of my family from February 15th (Saturday). We took an ANA night flight from Haneda airport to Honolulu, and then transferred onto a Hawaiian flight to Lihue Airport on Kauai Island that afternoon. We then travelled to Hotel H located near the coast beneath the gentle sunshine. Having arrived at the hotel, which is built along the coastline, we had a drink in the beachfront lobby that provides panoramic views of the ocean before checking in. We spent a very pleasant evening gazing at the sunset over dinner in a restaurant that overlooks the ocean. On the following day, we visited the Waimea Canyon, which is known as the Grand Canyon of the Pacific, and the Jurassic Napali Coast. The magnificent nature was breathtaking, and on our way home, we treated ourselves to hot dogs said to be the best in Kauai. We played our "Living Room Party" almost every night after dinner. It was the first time we had chatted like this in a long time, and it consists of everybody telling the others their memories of the days they enjoyed the most. We stayed overnight in Waikiki on the night before our return to Japan. We enjoyed a wonderful night at the Hotel Residence R. We all felt rather gloomy as we boarded our ANA flight from Honolulu, and my daughters (who didn't want to go home) had tears in their eyes as our airplane landed at Narita Airport. My younger daughter said that this was the first time that she had been reluctant to return home, and that she was very glad that we all went together. This weeklong vacation provided a wonderful opportunity for my family to get together. I am very grateful to the company for this. Even the God of Thunder said "thank you for some wonderful memories" without unleashing a single lightning bolt; the first time in a long time. However, could it be that the casual storm of demands for a replay are more punishing than the lightning...???

And, finally... I began a 14-day period of working remotely from home on our return, and I would like to apologize to everybody in the company for any inconvenience this may cause them. (Sorry for the strange ending.)

