



# The Taiwan Test

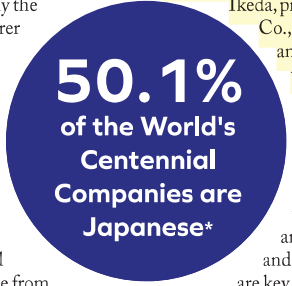
AS TENSIONS WITH BEIJING RISE, THE ISLAND'S NEW PRESIDENT **LAI CHING-TE** STANDS HIS GROUND

BY CHARLIE CAMPBELL

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## The Centennial Superstars

Few nations value experience and history as deeply as Japan. It's little surprise then, that 50% of the world's centennial companies, founded more than 100 years ago, are Japanese. Spanning centuries is about more than just history, though—enduring success is all about blending tradition with new business trends and developments. That's definitely the case for Danto Tile Co., Ltd. "As a manufacturer of tiles since the 19th century, we have experienced tremendous change and are taking steps to remain a leader in the industry," said President Kaoru Yoshida. Yuzo Kobayashi, president of timber company Sannosuke Kobayashi Co., Ltd., is also working to stay ahead of the curve. "Industries like ours are in need of technologies that can automate work. DX in our industry will most likely be drone technology, with which we will be able to analyze more efficiently and cut time from investigation to harvesting significantly," said Kobayashi. Jo Ozawa, president of food producer T.K. Shin Co., Ltd., agreed. "Clients always request better quality and better taste. Our company is trying to meet these demands, and through competition, it has survived and thrived in this industry," said Ozawa. Iwao Tokita, president of seed producer Tokita Seed



Co., Ltd., is proud of his nation's international performance. "I can proudly say that Japan is very much leading the world seed market. Japan has a strong culture, especially when it comes to family businesses," said Tokita. Corporate traditions are a major factor in Japanese success, according to Makoto Ikeda, president of Tokyo Rubber Manufacturing Co., Ltd. "Japan is famous for quality products and durability stemming from expertise and technology that cannot be achieved in a short time," said Ikeda. Hiromitsu Miyahara, president of Miyahara Co., Ltd., believes that *monozukuri*, the principle of prioritizing quality and customer service, remains king. "Conducting business the *monozukuri* way is what Japanese quality and technology are built upon. The resourcefulness, reliability and mutual respect we enjoy with all our partners are key," said Miyahara. At plaster and surface material manufacturer Tagawa Sangyo Co., Ltd., this also extends overseas. "We are planning to set up partnerships in other regions to improve the efficiency of our supply network, reduce CO2 emissions and shorten lead times for customers," said President Yukihira Nobuyoshi.

\*"World's Longest-Lasting Companies Ranking. (2022)" Nikkei BP Consulting

### The Quality Advantage

Japan's manufacturing sector has always played a huge part in the nation's economic success. Today, despite challenges such as low-cost rivals, shifting markets and geopolitics, its strength has endured thanks to a constant commitment to quality above all else. Inspired by the *monozukuri* business tradition of maintaining the highest possible standards, today's business leaders are just as committed to upholding Japan's reputation. "One of the biggest strengths Japanese companies exhibit is a consistent, high-quality approach," said Yoichi Nishida, president of Rising Corporation. Koichi Ikoma, president of Yamamura Photonics Co., Ltd., agreed. "Our parent company, Yamamura Group's corporate philosophy is 'Quality is the key to our business,' and we follow this," said Ikoma. With rival nations rushing to undercut Japan, Yuichi Mano, president of Mitsubishi Logisnext Co., Ltd., believes in holding firm. "Many other countries are now catching up. However, we maintain our *monozukuri* mindset when looking at our overseas factories," said Mano. That feeling is shared by Toshinori Minohara, chairman and CEO of Takane Electronics Corporation. "We have displayed a track record in producing high-quality components from all of our sites, within and beyond Japan's borders," said Minohara. Craftsmanship and skills are crucial, according to Fumio Ueda, president of Alinotech Co., Ltd. "Each craftsman and engineer strives to give their best to achieve the highest quality and results. This mindset is unique and remarkable," said Ueda.

### Renewable Manufacturing



"Cutting wood has an impact on nature, so to compensate, we replant the same type."

**Yuzo Kobayashi**  
President,  
Sannosuke Kobayashi Co., Ltd.

Even in the age of modern manufacturing and high-tech materials, timber is still essential for a wide range of construction and infrastructure projects. Japanese wood processing and import firm Sannosuke Kobayashi Co., Ltd. has specialized in sustainably sourcing timber since 1907 and is playing a role in shaping the industry's future. The company supplies vital infrastructure, such as railway sleepers, and is now looking to expand in North America. It is also helping advance the sector by utilizing technology such as automation and land survey drones while placing great importance on sustainability, according to President Yuzo Kobayashi. "We have a project called 'The Present Tree' for planting tens of thousands of trees. This will be our fifth such initiative, a trend we plan to maintain," said Kobayashi.

