

Sustainability Management Under Sumitomo : The CEOs' Decision-making Process Regarding Smoke Pollution at the Besshi Copper Mine in Japan 2 : Masaya Suzuki : Management Through “Itoku-shori” , Aiming for a Sustainable Society

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(出版者 / Publisher)

法政大学イノベーション・マネジメント研究センター

(雑誌名 / Journal or Publication Title)

法政大学イノベーション・マネジメント研究センター ワーキングペーパーシリーズ

(巻 / Volume)

219

(開始ページ / Start Page)

1

(終了ページ / End Page)

13

(発行年 / Year)

2019-11-20

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November 20, 2019

No. **219**

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2. Masaya Suzuki: management through "Itoku-shori", aiming for a sustainable society

Masaatsu Takehara, Naoya Hasegawa

Abstract:

Modern companies excessively prioritize short-term profit-making and this causes a range of social and environmental problems. To correct this, companies need to adopt a new approach in order to integrate the creation of environmental, social and economic values by tackling global problems, especially those described in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as climate change. Japan used to have business leaders who understood and implemented this type of approach. In this article we shall review the management styles of Teigo Iba and Masaya Suzuki, Sumitomo's CEOs in the pre-war period. These men rejected short-termism, solved smoke pollution problems, and restored the natural environment. Their philosophy and actions were in advance of the SDG era. In this article, we will focus on Masaya Suzuki.

1. Critical Biography

(1) The early life and younger days

Photo 1



Masaya Suzuki (1861-1922)
(Source)Suzuki Masaya Biography
Compilation Committee

Masaya Suzuki was born in the present-day Miyazaki Prefecture on February 24th, 1861. It is said that he grew up receiving a strong influence from his father and three elder brothers. His brother Satoo became a diplomat after he graduated from a school which later became the Faculty of Law at the University of Tokyo. Satoo held posts as the Japanese Ambassador to Sweden, Ambassador to Belgium, and Ambassador Extraordinary in Austria. He served as the Counsellor Plenipotentiary at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (Taisho-era year 8).

In 1869, Masaya Suzuki entered a Hanko (domain school) named Meirindo and learned the study of Japanese classical literature (Kokugaku), Sinology, and English for 4 years until the school was closed due to the reform of the educational system. In 1876, Masaya entered Keimei Prefectural School in Kanazawa. In the year following his entrance to Keimei School, the Seinan War took place. Suzuki's father, who refused to cooperate with the rebel army, died in prison. Suzuki went to Tokyo to get help from his brother Satoo as he was not able to return to his hometown due to the chaos of the war.

In September 1883, Suzuki entered Tokyo Imperial University. Among his classmates in the university there were prominent men such as Senkichiro Hayakawa¹ (Mitsui Zaibatsu [financial combine]), Kitokuro Ikki² (Minister of Education, Minister of Home Affairs), and Kosai Uchida (Minister of Foreign Affairs). In 1887 (Meiji-era year 20), Suzuki entered the Ministry of Home Affairs on graduating from the Tokyo Imperial University.

(2) Days in the Ministry of Home Affairs

When Suzuki entered the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Minister was Aritomo Yamagata. In 1889, Suzuki was assigned to Matsuyama as an Ehime prefectural clerk. In 1890, a festival was held to celebrate 200 years of the Besshi copper mine in Niihama, Ehime Prefecture. Suzuki, who was working for the Ehime prefectural government, was invited to the festival as a guest. This was his first encounter with Sumitomo-company people.

In 1890, Suzuki transferred to Osaka as an Osaka prefectural clerk. Following the festival in Niihama, the Sumitomo head office in Osaka held a similar festival to celebrate 200 years of the Besshi copper mine. Suzuki was once more invited to this festival as a guest and made the following remark: "Sumitomo's management of the

¹ Senkichiro Hayakawa (1863-1922) joined Mitsui Bank after he worked for the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Japan. He held positions such as Representative Director of Mitsui Bank.

² Kitokuro Ichiki (1867-1944) served as the Minister of Education and the Minister for Home affairs during the 2nd Okuma administration.

Besshi copper mine is ethical and has won the sympathy of local people”.

Suzuki transferred to Gifu Prefecture in 1893, but within only six months he was again transferred to the Patent Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce.

In 1894, Saihei Hirose, Sumitomo’s first president, retired. Hirose contributed to the development of the Sumitomo family for over 57 years, during which he rescued the Besshi copper mine from the crisis of its requisition by the new Meiji government. Teigo Iba, who succeeded Hirose, worked for a solution to the smoke-problem in the Besshi copper mine under Sumitomo’s corporate philosophy, termed “Jiri-Rita-Koshi-Ichijo” in Japanese.

Iba is evaluated highly as a pioneer who promoted CSR in Japan. Iba practiced management which was not aimed at pursuing a short-term profit but was always conscious of making a balance between public and private interest. In addition, Iba noticed Suzuki as a talented figure who could lead Sumitomo in the future.

(3) Joining Sumitomo

As previously mentioned, Ehime Prefecture and Osaka Prefecture, where Suzuki worked, were places which had close connections with Sumitomo. Through his management of the Besshi copper mine, Suzuki deepened his understanding of the management concept and business philosophy of Sumitomo and developed a friendship with Saihei Hirose and Teigo Iba.

Iba, who had succeeded Hirose as the second president of Sumitomo, did not like top-down management; rather, he esteemed decision-making through discussion at the board of directors meeting. To strive for new business while developing Sumitomo’s existing business, it was indispensable for the company to recruit and train people who had good judgment and a high capability. Iba accelerated his efforts to recruit talent from outside of the company.

Through his deepening interaction with Suzuki, Iba came to have complete trust in him as a person who could manage diversified businesses and achieve sustainable growth with a good understanding of Sumitomo’s management philosophy. In 1896, on accepting the offer from Iba, Suzuki decided to join Sumitomo. At that time he was 36 years old. The reason why Suzuki determined to join Sumitomo was that he sympathized with Sumitomo’s management philosophy based on “Jiri-Rita-Koshi-Ichijo”. Suzuki told Iba of his willingness to join Sumitomo if his adherence to the mindset of making a profit by virtue (Itoku-Shori) was accepted. Suzuki’s thinking was in full agreement with Sumitomo’s business philosophy of not to pursuing short-term profit.

Iba, who designated Suzuki as his successor, used to be a judge. Iba disliked any unfair personnel management and favoritism. Iba’s uncle, Saihei Hirose, had strongly recommended that Iba should join Sumitomo. The biggest reason why Iba decided to join Sumitomo was his attachment to Sumitomo’s management philosophy

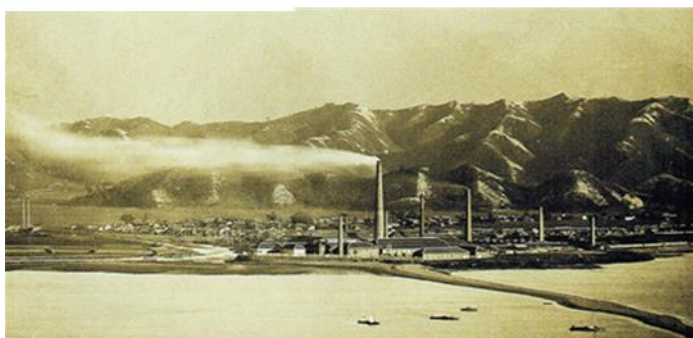
of putting public interest first. Iba and Suzuki, who both decided to join Sumitomo after resigning as government officials, had a lot in common.

Iba had a strong feeling of trust in Suzuki, a man who shared his business mindset. Suzuki, living up to Iba's expectations, solved the smoke-pollution problem at the Besshi copper mine. He then led the modernization of Sumitomo's business while at the same time enhancing its spirit.

(4) General Manager at the Besshi Copper Mine

In those days Sumitomo implemented organizational reform, and Teigo Iba, who was on the board of directors as well as general manager of the Besshi copper mine, took a practical position in top management.

Photo 2



The Soubiraki smelter
(Source) Niihama City Hirose Memorial Museum
(2007)

With the series of modernization measures Saihei Hirose took, copper production at the Besshi copper mine substantially increased. In Niihama a Western-style Soubiraki smelter was constructed and started its full operation from 1888³. When the Besshi mine railway was connected to Niihama in 1893⁴, carrying capacity improved dramatically and as a result copper production substantially increased. The completion of the

Soubiraki smelter and the railroad moved the center of the smelting work from the mountain area in Besshi to the coastal zone in Niihama.

On the other hand, such a rapid increase in copper smelting caused smoke pollution. A large amount of sulfur dioxide was produced from the copper smelting process and this caused a great deal of damage to the crops in the area. Smoke injury at the Besshi copper mine, together with mining pollution (contaminated water) at the Ashio copper mine, became incidents of full-scale industrial pollution which Japan experienced for the first time.

In 1894, to tackle the smoke-problem, Sumitomo decided on an unusual personnel change, namely that Iba should be transferred from General Manager at the Sumitomo head office to General Manager of the Besshi copper mine. Iba took up the post at the Besshi copper mine and confronted various problems.

³ The Soubiraki smelter was completed in 1884 (Meiji-era year 17).

⁴ The Besshi mining railroad was composed of the lower-part railroad (10 km) in Niihama and upper-part railroad (5.5 km) in the mountainous areas.

In those days, exhaust desulfurization technology was not yet established, so it was difficult to remove sulfur dioxide from the smelting process. Therefore, Iba made a decision to purchase Shisaka-jima, an uninhabited island located 20km off the coast of Niihama, and to move the Soubiraki smelter to the island. In 1896, the establishment of the Shisaka-jima smelter began under Iba's instruction.

After returning to Japan from an inspection tour of Western countries (the United States and Europe) in 1898, Suzuki became a director and Vice-President of Sumitomo's head office. The following year, in 1899, Suzuki also took up the post of General Manager of the Besshi mine, as Iba's successor, and spent about three years in Niihama until 1902.

(5) Inaugurated as Sumitomo President

In 1904, Suzuki, who was serving on the board of directors and as General Manager of the Sumitomo head office was made Sumitomo's President upon Iba's retirement. At that time Iba was 58 years old and Suzuki was 44 years old. Iba left the following comment and is said to have been very satisfied with the fact that he left the management of Sumitomo in the hands of the younger Suzuki: "Although the aged have a responsibility to help and guide the young, they try to use their experience aggressively and have the young blindly obey them. As a result, the challenging spirit of the young is crushed, and their courses are closed. The most damaging thing to the progress and development of a business is not the negligence of the young but the existence of the aged" (Iba, (1904) 165).

The main issues Suzuki tackled as the president of Sumitomo were: (1) a fundamental solution to the smoke-pollution problem at the Besshi copper mine; (2) deepening the business philosophy and diversification of business; and (3) modernization of the organization.

Suzuki believed that Iba's decision to relocate the copper refinery to Shisaka-jima island would fundamentally solve the smoke problem. However, ironically, the relocation to Shisaka-jima island resulted in the wider spread of smoke damage. What was most painful to Suzuki was the fact that Sumitomo's business was actually hurting local residents. Gaining profit at the expense of the local residents was against Sumitomo's business philosophy of "Jiri-Rita-Koshi-Ichijo".

Based on Sumitomo's business philosophy, Suzuki set out a policy of taking whatever actions were possible to solve the smoke-pollution problem fundamentally. The dispute with the victims of smoke pollution calmed down as the following agreement was concluded: setting a limit on the quantity of smelting; an operational limitation to the summer when the smoke damage was more likely to occur; and the payment of compensation for damages.

In 1939 (Showa-era year 14), a neutralization factory (Petersen type sulfuric acid plant) was completed at

the Shisaka-jima island smelter. With this new facility, the smoke problem which had started in September 1893 finally reached a complete solution after 46 years.

Chart 1: List of Sumitomo Presidents

	Tenure of office	Took office /Retired	Years	President
First	1877	Took office	17	Saihei Hirose
	1894	Retired		
Blank period	1894	-	6	Teigo Iba
	1900			
Second	1900	Took office	4	Teigo Iba
	1904	Retired		
Third	1904	Took office	18	Masaya Suzuki
	1922	Retired		
4th	1922	Took office	3	Menkichi Nakata
	1925	Retired		
5th	1925	Took office	5	Hirokichi Yukawa
	1930	Retired		
6th	1930	Took office	11	Masatsune Ogura
	1941	Retired		
7th	1941	Took office	5	Shunnosuke Furuta
	1946	Retired		

Source: The author.

(6) Deepening of the management philosophy

Suzuki made the following remark: “A person who engages in the business of Sumitomo needs to understand the correct reason for things, esteem morality and gain trust from society. If the duties of the morality cannot be achieved in a business conducted by Sumitomo, that business should be abolished” (Masaya Suzuki Biography Compilation Committee(1961), 140). Under its corporate philosophy of “Jiri-Rita-Koshi-Ichijo”, Sumitomo made it an essential part of its business to carry out its duties not as a mere private enterprise but as a state organization (a public entity).

The history of the Sumitomo family began with Masatomo Sumitomo (1585 - 1652), who ran a pharmacy in Kyoto in the 17th century. “Monju-in-Shiigaki”, which Masatomo Sumitomo left behind, was the essence of the business philosophy of Sumitomo: that is, the view of management that the purpose of business is not just making a profit but refining one’s personality and practicing business based on morality. It was Saihei Hirose, the first president of Sumitomo, who established this as Sumitomo’s business philosophy. This philosophy was passed on to Suzuki from Iba and further deepened.

(7) Diversification of business and modernization of the organization

In 1911, Sumitomo Wire Manufacturing was established and the manufacturing of high-voltage cables for telephones and electric power started for the first time in the country. Sumitomo Copper Rolled Products, which was established in 1897, started to manufacture jointless steel tubes, responding to demand from the Navy.

In those days, artificial fertilizer was produced as a result of the technological innovation employed to collect the sulfur dioxide which had been the cause of smoke pollution at the Besshi copper mine. To start the full-scale manufacturing of artificial fertilizer, Sumitomo entered into the chemical industry by establishing manure manufacturing (the company later became Sumitomo Chemical) in 1931. In that same year, Osaka Hokkou (North Port) Inc. (the company later became Sumitomo Corporation) was also established, with a view to the business expansion of Osaka-bay through harbor improvement and the development of the coastal industrial zone.

Sumitomo had had a family tradition of esteeming technology since its foundation, and therefore it achieved magnificent results at the Besshi copper mine by introducing modern mining technology. Suzuki inherited this family tradition, and actively introduced modern technologies from foreign countries. Businesses such as wire, copper rolled products, and artificial fertilizer were created as the result of technological innovations based on scientific knowledge. It is possible to say that the characteristic of Sumitomo's business in Suzuki's time was avoiding the pursuit of short-term profit and expanding business through the introduction of modern technologies.

In 1921, Suzuki reorganized Sumitomo from being an independent business proprietor into a limited partnership. Among other zaibatsu (industrial conglomerates) in Japan, the Mitsubishi zaibatsu established the Mitsubishi Limited partnership in 1893 and separated the personal assets of the Iwasaki family and the management of Mitsubishi's business. The Mitsui zaibatsu established a holding company, the Mitsui unlimited partnership, in 1909, and separated the personal assets of the Mitsui family and the management of Mitsui's business.

In the case of Sumitomo, the new Sumitomo limited partnership was established to improve the governance of Sumitomo head office in the wake of the expansion and diversification of the business. The executives who had management rights were the following five: Tomosumi Sumitomo, Tadaki Sumitomo, Masaya Suzuki (President), Menkichi Nakata (board of directors), and Hirokichi Yukawa (board of directors). Tomosumi Sumitomo, who was the head of the Sumitomo family, had three children, but they did not have a voice in Sumitomo's business management (Asao-Sumitomo Archives(2014), 222-223). Sumitomo's limited partnership had a unique structure of governance in that a majority of the executives were non-family members. The reason why such a liberal organization was realized was because Tomosumi Sumitomo, the head of the Sumitomo family, had complete trust in Suzuki.

(8) Suzuki's later years

In 1922 Suzuki suffered a cerebral hemorrhage while in a car heading for a branch of Sumitomo Bank. He became paralyzed over the left side of his body by this stroke. After receiving medical treatment for a few days in a room of the Sumitomo Bank, he took some rest at his home in Tokyo. It was 4 months after he first became ill that Suzuki returned to his home in Kobe.

In line with Hirose and Iba, Suzuki was always thinking that he wanted to make Sumitomo's forestry business the last bastion of the company. He said, "I want to develop forestry extensively, and if by any chance the other businesses decline, I want to make forestry the last fortress of Sumitomo's business" (Masaya Suzuki Biography Compilation Committee (1961), 185).

Having become ill, Suzuki determined to resign as the president of Sumitomo. His faithful service to Sumitomo had lasted 26 years, for 19 of which as president he had shouldered the responsibility of management in many areas of the Sumitomo's business. It can be said that Suzuki certainly lived up to the expectation of Iba who entrusted him the future of Sumitomo.

In 1922, Suzuki had another cerebral hemorrhage in his home and became paralyzed over the right side of his body. He was trying to recuperate at home but developed pneumonia, which then became fatal. He passed away at the age of 62.

2. Analysis of the essence of Masaya Suzuki's management

(1) The fundamental solution to the smoke-pollution problem at the Besshi copper mine

In those days the technology for removing sulfur dioxide from smoke was not established. To deal with the smoke problem, the only possible solution was moving the smelter to a place far away from agricultural land. With the relocation of the smelter to Shisaka-jima island which Iba decided on, everyone hoped that the smoke problem would be completely solved.

Photo 3



The Shisaka-jima smelter
(Source)Niihama City Hirose Memorial Museum (2007) page18

Cutting short his participation in an inspection tour of Europe and America, Suzuki came back to Japan. Then he became General Manager of the Besshi Copper Mine as Iba's successor in 1899. Suzuki accelerated the construction of the smelter on

Shisaka-jima island. The move was completed in 1905 after many twists and turns. During that time, Suzuki was appointed General Manager of the Sumitomo head office in 1902, so he returned to Osaka.

When a test operation at the Shisaka-jima smelter began in 1904, an occurrence of smoke pollution was reported from a village on the opposite shore from the island. When the smelter began its full operation the following year, complaints about the damage from smoke pollution further increased.

At first, Sumitomo rejected the complaints from the farmers by saying that the cause of their crop damage was not smoke but insects. But Sumitomo could not ignore the mounting voices of the farmers and it requested Tokyo Imperial University to conduct an investigation into the cause of the smoke pollution. The university concluded that the cause of the smoke pollution was sulfur dioxide emitted from the Shisaka-jima smelter.

Photo 4 The actual state of smoke injury



(Source)Niihama City Hirose Memorial Museum (2007) page18

The damage from the smoke further expanded after 1908, and protests and opposition movements mounted by victimized farmers became more intense. In 1909, the farmers submitted a petition for rescue to the Imperial Diet. Smoke pollution at the Besshi copper mine became a political issue together with other mining-pollution problems such as the Ashio copper mine, the Kosaka copper mine, and the Hitachi mine.

In 1909, Suzuki negotiated with representatives of the farmers to solve the smoke problem. He proposed that instead of Sumitomo paying compensation to individual farmers, it would provide the necessary capital for farmers to improve their farming and eventually increase their income. Suzuki also said, "If the technology to remove sulfur dioxide is developed, even if it costs more than the total amount of compensation, Sumitomo is sure to introduce such technology". However, the farmers hardened their attitude as they thought the amount of damage Sumitomo calculated was too small, and negotiations broke down.

In 1910, the smoke problem became a political issue again. In that year, for the first time, a conference to discuss compensation for smoke pollution was held at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. As a result of the conference, they made a contract which stipulated the payment of compensation and the upper limit for annual copper production at the Shisaka-jima smelter. This contract was renewed as many as eleven times until 1939, when new technology which enabled the complete removal of sulfur dioxide from the smelting process was established. When combining the compensation and donations, the total amount Sumitomo spent during this time reached as much as 8.5 million yen. The duty to pay reparations, as well as the cap on the production of copper, caused serious harm to the business of Sumitomo.

On the other hand, Suzuki did not make any individual compensation payments to the farmers; instead, he invested all the funds for compensation in the improvement of agriculture and forestry. Suzuki's investment succeeded, enabling the planting of rice and wheat that had resistance to smoke, and the planting of saplings that had resistance to sulfur dioxide. The reason why Suzuki eliminated the option of individual compensation was his firm belief that "No-Kou-Heishin" should be promoted. "No-Kou-Heishin" means that both agriculture and the mining industry should be promoted simultaneously. What Suzuki aimed at was making a mechanism by which both local communities and companies could realize sustainable growth. It is possible to say that Suzuki's view is essentially based on the same sense of value as CSV, which has drawn so much attention in modern society.

(2) Establishment of a business philosophy

The biggest reason why Iba designated Suzuki as his successor was he was confident Suzuki was a person who could take over Sumitomo's business philosophy and fulfil the company's responsibility to society as a corporate manager.

The first Sumitomo president, Saihei Hirose, made efforts towards the establishment of a business base for the company through the modernization of the Besshi copper mine. In 1891, Hirose expressed the management philosophy of Sumitomo in the three following three articles:

(1) Sumitomo esteems trust in business.

(2) Sumitomo does not chase "Furi" (quick profits) even if it faces changes in the business environment or changes in revenue or profit.

(3) Sumitomo will ensure the sustainable growth of the Besshi copper mine, which is Sumitomo's core business.

Hirose esteemed trust from society. The founder of Sumitomo, Masatomo Sumitomo, described the business philosophy of Sumitomo as "Monju-in-Shiigaki"⁵. Masatomo Sumitomo explained that: (1) What needs to be esteemed for a successful business is honesty, carefulness and steadiness; and (2) The purpose of business is not just making a profit but refining one's personality and practicing business based on morality.

If we interpret Masatomo Sumitomo's teaching in today's context, it shows that the trust which a company is given from society is not judged by the size of assets it has, but rather by its business philosophy, based on social responsibility, and the character and behavior of its employees. In other words, the teaching of Masatomo Sumitomo is that we must not forget that trust is an intangible asset in business, and the accumulation of wealth (tangible assets) produced by these intangible assets of trust is the central concept of Sumitomo's business

⁵ "Monju-in-Shiigaki" means that the basics of business is to gain trust from society based on the teachings of Buddhism.

philosophy.

The teaching expressed in (1), which is that trust is everything in business, leads to the 2nd teaching (2), which is that employees of Sumitomo must not pursue short-term profits. Pursuing a short-term profit is an act contrary to the business mind of Sumitomo, which aims to promote business to the benefit of society. When business has the purpose of enhancing public interest in society, then business can gain trust from society. That trust becomes the foundation of business development.

(3) reconfirmed the importance of the Besshi copper mine for the Sumitomo business. Without the Besshi copper mine, there was no future for Sumitomo. When thinking about the long-term development of the copper business under Sumitomo's corporate philosophy, "Jiri-Rita-Koshi-Ichijo" was essential for the sustainable development of Sumitomo.

Deepening Sumitomo's business philosophy which Hirose and Iba built, Suzuki practiced their ideas in Sumitomo's businesses, including the Besshi copper mine. Suzuki said, "Making progress and innovation is necessary for us, but our business philosophy of 'not pursuing short-term profit' and 'pursuing the business that benefits society' will not change".

What Suzuki concentrated on most was to promote and develop human resources. Even if we set up a rule backed by a noble philosophy, it is human beings who understand and practice that rule. Suzuki thought that developing staff who had a sound moral sense would lead to practicing Sumitomo's business philosophy effectively.

Photo 5 Besshi Copper Mine before foresting (1881)



(Source) Shoukei Suehiro (2005), page 34

The business philosophy of Sumitomo is well embodied in their forestry business. Iba expanded the scale of the reforestation business to restore bare mountains in the Besshi area. In his last days, Iba said, "To me, what can be called the 'true business' for Sumitomo is the foresting business. Other businesses do not have to continue" (Nishikawa (1990), 111). Suzuki further developed the forestry business Hirose and Iba had concentrated on, and when Sumitomo's limited partnership was established in

1921, he put the forestry business under the direct control of the head office. In Suzuki's time Sumitomo's forestry business expanded into Hokkaido, Kyushu, and the Korean Peninsula.

Suzuki stated as follows: "Because mining is causing environmental destruction, we must make compensation. When considering mining damage to the nation's land, we must do the work of protecting our land.

For this reason, reforestation of the mountains is the most suitable. Forests in mountains protect land and offer great benefits to river system management and flood control” (Masaya Suzuki Biography Compilation Committee (1961), 183).

Moreover, as we can see, Suzuki stated that he wanted to make the forestry business the last bastion of Sumitomo if other businesses declined. From these words, we can feel Suzuki’s strong consideration of and commitment to the forestry business.

(3) Management philosophy: people are the most important resource

Suzuki thought that those who engage in Sumitomo’s business must understand the reason for things, esteem morality, and gain trust from society. Therefore, he attached importance to the training of staff who would eventually inherit the business philosophy of Sumitomo. Iba stated, “The most important thing in our work is to have the best successors and to choose the right time to hand our work over to those successors” (Iba (1904), 165).

The type of people Suzuki sought had all of the following four qualities: honesty, diligence, capability, and health. Even if a person’s ability was excellent, that was not sufficient if the other three qualities were lacking.

Suzuki conducted job interviews by himself and asked candidates various questions. He even spent three hours to interview just one student. Suzuki left the following remark: “I don’t mind even if business is interrupted as a result of my absence for a week. It would be a temporary loss. However, if we fail to recruit an excellent talent, the loss is immeasurable” (Masaya Suzuki Biography Compilation Committee (1961), 153). Suzuki’s remark clearly shows that he sought staff who had both a sense of value and the morality to lead Sumitomo in the future.

Suzuki also concentrated on employee education. He told young Sumitomo employees that Sumitomo’s policy on human resources was never based on one-sided elements, such as an academic record, and therefore appointments and promotions were conducted fairly (Masaya Suzuki Biography Compilation Committee(1961), 157). By saying so, he encouraged them to continue their efforts and to have hope for their futures.

Suzuki also established a vocational school in 1915 as part of Sumitomo’s social activities aimed at rescuing the poor. At Sumitomo, various discussions were conducted about the business of providing relief for the poor. As a result, they reached the conclusion that the best option for Sumitomo was to provide vocational training to the children of the poor. The objective of establishing a vocational school was to provide low-income people with the necessary knowledge and skills for them to contribute to the development of industry in Japan (Masaya Suzuki Biography Compilation Committee (1961), 283-284). Suzuki felt dissatisfied with school education in those days in that it overemphasized cramming knowledge into students and as a result it was not effectively bringing up promising human beings who could play an active part in society. Suzuki’s management philosophy shares many

underlying ideas with the United Nations' SDGs, which attract attention in modern society.

In writing this paper, the authors received a grant for English proofreading from the Hosei University Research Institute for Innovation Management.

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