

# Yamaha Motor Monthly Newsletter

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A bird's-eye view of Yamaha Motor headquarters. The Enshunada Coast (Pacific Ocean) can be seen in the distance.

*The Core of Yamaha Motor*

## Enshu: The Home of Yamaha Motor

A Town of *Monozukuri* Cultivated by the *Yaramaika* Spirit

The Yamaha Motor group today is a global enterprise with some 150 companies in over 30 countries and regions around the world engaged in the manufacturing and marketing of a wide range of products that include motorcycles, outboard motors, recreational vehicles and numerous other product lines. The core of this international group is our corporate headquarters located in the Enshu region of western Shizuoka Prefecture in Japan. This is where the company was founded and the headquarters remains firmly rooted here with the Iwata Main Factory adjacent to it and the various workplaces of our Yamaha *Monozukuri* working together in close proximity. It is here that everything from product planning and development to manufacturing, marketing, distribution and aftersales services are administered and conducted in an integrated system. In this issue, we introduce Yamaha Motor's home region of Enshu where we have worked and grown for 60 years as a company that strives to "offer new excitement and a more fulfilling life for people all over the world."

## Born in Hamamatsu, Flourished in Iwata

Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd. was founded in 1955 to make the motorcycle business of Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd. (presently Yamaha Corporation) an independent company. Its first offices were located in the buildings of Nippon Gakki in Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, and manufacture of its first motorcycle, the YA-1, began at the Hamana Factory around 10 km to the north in an area named Hamakita-cho, Hamana-gun at the time. Yamaha Motor would later purchase the Hamana Factory and move its head offices there; the factory served as the main base for its manufacturing and marketing activities for more than 15 years.

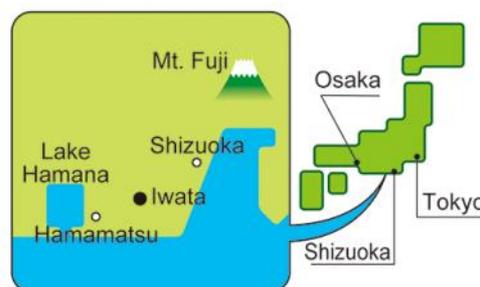
Then, going into the early 1960s, Yamaha Motor borrowed the corporate strength of Nippon Gakki to firmly establish its foundation in the motorcycle business by building numerous facilities in the Hamamatsu area, such as the Yamaha Technological Research Institute, the Tenryu Test Course, a new factory and several group companies. As the lineup of Yamaha products expanded to include sport models and mopeds in the 125cc to 250cc range, full-scale exports to overseas markets began. The company also entered the marine industry with boats, outboard motors and other products, and its scale of business began to expand steadily.

At the same time, motorcycle production was growing, from more than 100,000 units in 1960 to over 200,000 in 1963. Repeated expansions to boost production capacity were made at the company's home factory, but it was judged that this would soon fail to meet growing production needs and construction began in 1965 on a new large-scale factory with 148,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space in the city of Iwata. Beginning with the manufacture of the Toyota 2000GT and other models, the various production systems were readied in stages, and by the end of 1970, the first main motorcycle assembly lines went into operation at the new factory. Together with the headquarters factory in Hamakita City (present-day Hamakita-ku, Hamamatsu City) and other facilities, the company sought to increase annual production to 800,000 units.

Then in February 1972, the head offices were moved to a new building within the Iwata Main Factory complex. Today, factory floor space has been expanded to 534,000 m<sup>2</sup> and some 10,000 employees are working at the headquarters in management, the core administration sections for each line of business, and at the workplaces for Yamaha *Monozukuri*. In addition to the headquarters and the Iwata Main Factory, there are seven Yamaha Motor factories, including the company's original main Hamana Factory (today's Hamakita Factory), two technical centers, four test courses, several offices, the Global Parts Center and other affiliated companies and facilities that support the work of the headquarters, all clustered in Iwata City and neighboring cities like Hamamatsu and Fukuroi. Together they form the central hub for the Yamaha Motor group.

## The Enshu *Yaramaika* Spirit that Helped Foster a Global Company

The cities of Hamamatsu and Iwata are where the Yamaha brand was born and are situated on the Pacific coast in the western part of Shizuoka Prefecture, which is roughly at the center of the Japanese archipelago that stretches to the southwest and northeast. From the early 8th century (Japan's Nara Period), this region was known as "Totomi" or "Enshu," and was located at about the midway point along the main highroad known as the Tokaido that connected the country's political center at the time in the Yamato region (today's Nara Prefecture) and the area that is modern-day Tokyo.



Shizuoka Prefecture is located roughly halfway between Tokyo and Osaka, with Mt. Fuji in its eastern boundary, Lake Hamana in its western extreme and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The part of the prefecture to the west of the Oi River was traditionally called "Enshu" or "Totomi" and the part to the east, "Suruga."

The area flourished because of its strategic position along the route, and in particular, the area that is now the city of Iwata was the heart of Enshu because it was where the region's administrative center and the main Buddhist temple with jurisdiction in the area were located. Later, during the 260 years of peace known as the Edo Period that began at the start of the 17th century, the castle town of Hamamatsu was the political seat of a succession of six feudal lords designated by the Tokugawa Shogunate. They ruled over the area as it prospered in forestry, woodworking, textiles and more by making use of the Tenryu River and the Tokaido highroad to transport goods by both water and land. As a result, the area became the home of many merchants and craftspeople. These artisans living in Hamamatsu and the surrounding areas of Enshu were blessed with an environment of valuable cultural exchange and they led industrious lives devoted to bettering their craft. Over time, the area's people acquired a unique character of always being eager to try things that no one had ever done before. This was reflected in the local dialect by the expression, *Yaramaika*, meaning "Let's give it a shot" or "Let's take on the challenge." This spirit became the backbone of Enshu workmanship.



Lake Hamana is the tenth largest lake in Japan and one with a rich natural environment. It is also where Yamaha Motor's marina is located.

Some very good examples of the *Yaramaika* spirit are Torakusu Yamaha, a medical instrument technician—and founder of the Yamaha brand—who would first encounter a foreign-made organ in need of repair in Hamamatsu, and go on to start the Yamaha Organ Manufacturing Company and later establish Nippon Gakki; and his skilled right-hand man Koichi Kawai, a local metalworking artisan who later founded Kawai Musical Instruments Mfg. Co., Ltd.

In 1927, when a heated labor dispute had brought Nippon Gakki to the verge of extinction, it was another Hamamatsu native with the *Yaramaika* spirit in his blood who answered the call from Nippon Gakki to help get the company back on its feet. Despite holding a position on the board of directors of a successful company and amid adamant opposition from his friends and family, Kaichi Kawakami became its third president. He would go on to implement a bold set of reforms that did indeed turn the company around with astounding success. After Nippon Gakki's miraculous recovery, Genichi Kawakami would become its fourth president and in addition to setting the company on a new course during Japan's post-WWII recovery to become an international corporation, he would also decide to take on a bold new challenge completely unrelated to musical instruments: entering the motorcycle business. With the initial success of that venture, Genichi Kawakami then founded Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd. and led the new company as its first president. He would eventually develop it into one of the world's leading motorcycle manufacturers, while employing a policy of multi-axial business diversification and globalization. He also instilled in both Yamahas the principles of taking on challenges and the ideal of creating *Kando*.\*



*Yaramaika* spirit is also a key word used on Yamaha's Japanese recruitment website to introduce the company and its culture.

The list of industrialists native to Enshu with its *Yaramaika* spirit is indeed an impressive one. It includes the likes of Sakichi Toyoda (the father of today's Toyota Group), who created Japan's first automatic textile loom and brought big advances to Japan's textile industry; Michio Suzuki, the founder of a loom manufacturer (presently

Suzuki Motor Corporation) who also led the company to create its first prototype automobiles and motorcycles; Kenjiro Takayanagi, the first in the world to project images by electrical transmission onto a cathode-ray tube (TV); and Soichiro Honda, the man who helped build the foundation of an international motorcycle industry in Japan before the emergence of Yamaha and guided Honda Motor Co., Ltd. to world prominence.

The efforts of Enshu natives like these has made the region one of Japan's leading centers of *Monozukuri* and the home of vehicle manufacturers like Suzuki, Honda and Yamaha, leading musical instrument makers, many small- and mid-sized companies and ventures boasting industry-leading specialized technologies, and companies in the field of photonics and electronics such as Hamamatsu Photonics K.K., known for its advanced sub-atomic particle (neutrino) R&D.

\**Kando* is a Japanese word for the simultaneous feelings of deep satisfaction and intense excitement that we experience when we encounter something of exceptional value.

## Community Programs for Developing Sporting Culture and Preserving the Local Environment

Firmly rooted in the Enshu region for more than 60 years, or 120 years if you include the Nippon Gakki era, engaging with the local communities in Hamamatsu, Iwata and other areas has always been a natural endeavor for Yamaha. Before terms like "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) became widespread, Yamaha Motor had long been involved a wide variety of such activities.

A good example is the Yamaha Jubilo Soccer School for local elementary and middle school students. The school was launched back in 1974, when the Jubilo Iwata professional football team of today was still a Yamaha Motor employee club team, and it is aimed at getting more children to experience the fun of playing football and to encourage people to embrace a lifetime of involvement in sports. In rugby as well, Yamaha Motor Jubilo players Ayumu Goromaru and Male Sau were selected for the Japanese national team that competed with such success in the Rugby World Cup 2015 in England, and the team itself has long been involved in outreach programs. Some examples are its Friendship Program of experiential rugby events for elementary school children in Iwata and the surrounding areas, and the Yamaha Motor Rugby School taught by former team members. Through such programs, the company has sought to nurture the spirit of cooperation among teammates and colleagues, concern for others and physical education that contributes to healthy minds and bodies.

Another community-oriented event we are involved in is the annual *Bike no Furusato Hamamatsu* (Hamamatsu, the Hometown of Motorbikes) festival. The three Hamamatsu-born manufacturers of Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha work together and help put on the event, presenting two days of stage performances, demo rides, riding courses for children and their parents, *Monozukuri* experience workshops, product exhibits and a variety of other attractions for the enjoyment of the local population and tourists.

Besides industry, Shizuoka is also a prefecture blessed with a beautiful natural environment with mountains, rivers, lakes and an ocean coastline. To help protect and preserve this environment, Yamaha has worked on an ongoing basis in cooperation with its group companies and local community groups in forest-planting activities, a Beach Clean-up Campaign and an environmental preservation program to protect the



As part of Yamaha Motor's CSR activities and youth development initiatives, employees are involved in a variety of programs in sports like rugby and football to encourage their spread and development.

sites along the Enshunada coast where endangered loggerhead sea turtles lay their eggs and to make sure the hatched baby turtles safely reach the sea.

Also, as we introduced in our last issue, through the Communication Plaza at Yamaha Motor headquarters, we are also involved in community outreach by putting on exhibitions about various products from our lines of business, introducing our corporate history, holding activities and events involving racing and more. Furthermore, there are other Plaza programs for educational institutions, focusing primarily on elementary and middle school students in Shizuoka Prefecture as a form of *Monozukuri* education, like invitations for factory tours. Events for families include ones where children and their parents can experience taking apart and re-assembling an engine or hand-building a model boat.

With programs like these, Yamaha will continue to carry on the spirit of its corporate heritage handed down from its earliest years, continue to take on new challenges to build on the unique style of Yamaha *Monozukuri* and fulfill our mission of "offering new excitement and a more fulfilling life for people all over the world" from its home of Enshu.

## Message from the Editor



I moved to Shizuoka from a different prefecture and the first thing I thought was that Enshu is a really nice area because it has a warm climate, a variety of natural beauty and that it's easy to travel to the big cities of Osaka to the west and Tokyo to the east. But I wondered why so many musical instrument and motorcycle manufacturers call it home. I often get asked the same thing by people who have also come from other prefectures or from overseas. With this newsletter issue,

I hope that this question and others have been answered and that you'd like to visit Enshu to see the home of the *Yaramaika* spirit of challenge firsthand. You might discover something with valuable future potential.

*Ryoko Ota*



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