

President's Message



Kibaturo Oki founded Oki Electric in January 1881 as Meikosha, Ltd. The company's history thus spans three centuries. The "progressive spirit" of the founder has been passed down inside the company over that period, through succeeding generations of managers and employees. The motive force behind this glorious history, and behind Oki Electric's contributions to the development of the information and communications industries in Japan, has been that very same progressive spirit.

Amidst incredible socio-economic changes, Oki Electric's contributions began with the manufacture of telephones and continued afterward with the development and marketing of creative products always positioned at the leading edge of their times. These included telegraph machines, telephone exchanges, wireless equipment, semiconductors, and computers. Supporting the company's success were Kibaturo Oki's foresight and his willingness to accept all challenges. Entrepreneur par excellence, Kibaturo Oki was a pioneer in the venture business.

In 1999, I happened to attend an exhibition that included one of the original Morse telegraph machines made by the French company Digney Fres. There I learned that Kibatato Oki himself once owned that same machine and later donated it to the Ministry of Communications.* As I paused to look closely at that simple machine, I felt some of the excitement, even passion, Kibatato Oki must have felt when he started out in the communications industry in the 1880s.

In considering Oki Electric's progressive spirit over the 120-year history brought together in this book, some discussions emerge that require honest reflection. It is good, therefore, while reviewing our company's long history, to remember the basics, to remember how the progressive spirit was developed in Oki Electric, during a period when it was more clearly necessary to have foresight and courage and to act forcefully and accept all challenges. Besides those needs, our contemporary age also has other requirements. We see greater emphasis placed on the individual, for example, and on close communication among individuals. As well, we must also carefully consider the global environment as we act to make Oki Electric a company that customers around the world can trust.

I hope to see our company accomplish a great leap forward over the next ten years. Toward that end, I would sincerely ask for the further support and cooperation of all those concerned.

Based on cooperation from the Japan Business History Institute, in charge of this history project, and from Thomas I. Elliott, the translator, Oki Electric's machine translation software, PENSÉE, was used in the translation process, and invaluable hints were gained for developing the software further. On this occasion I would express my sincere appreciation to the many persons involved in publication of this history.



Katsumasa Shinozuka
President and
Chief Executive Officer

* Takeaki Enomoto, later Japan's first Minister of Communications, brought two Morse telegraph machines back to Japan from the Netherlands in the mid-1860s. Years later, Kibatato Oki discovered one of the machines, bought it, and later donated it to the Ministry of Communications. The machine in the photo is a replica made by Oki Electric engineers to commemorate the company's 120th Anniversary in 2001.

(Donated to Communications Museum on September 20, 2001.)