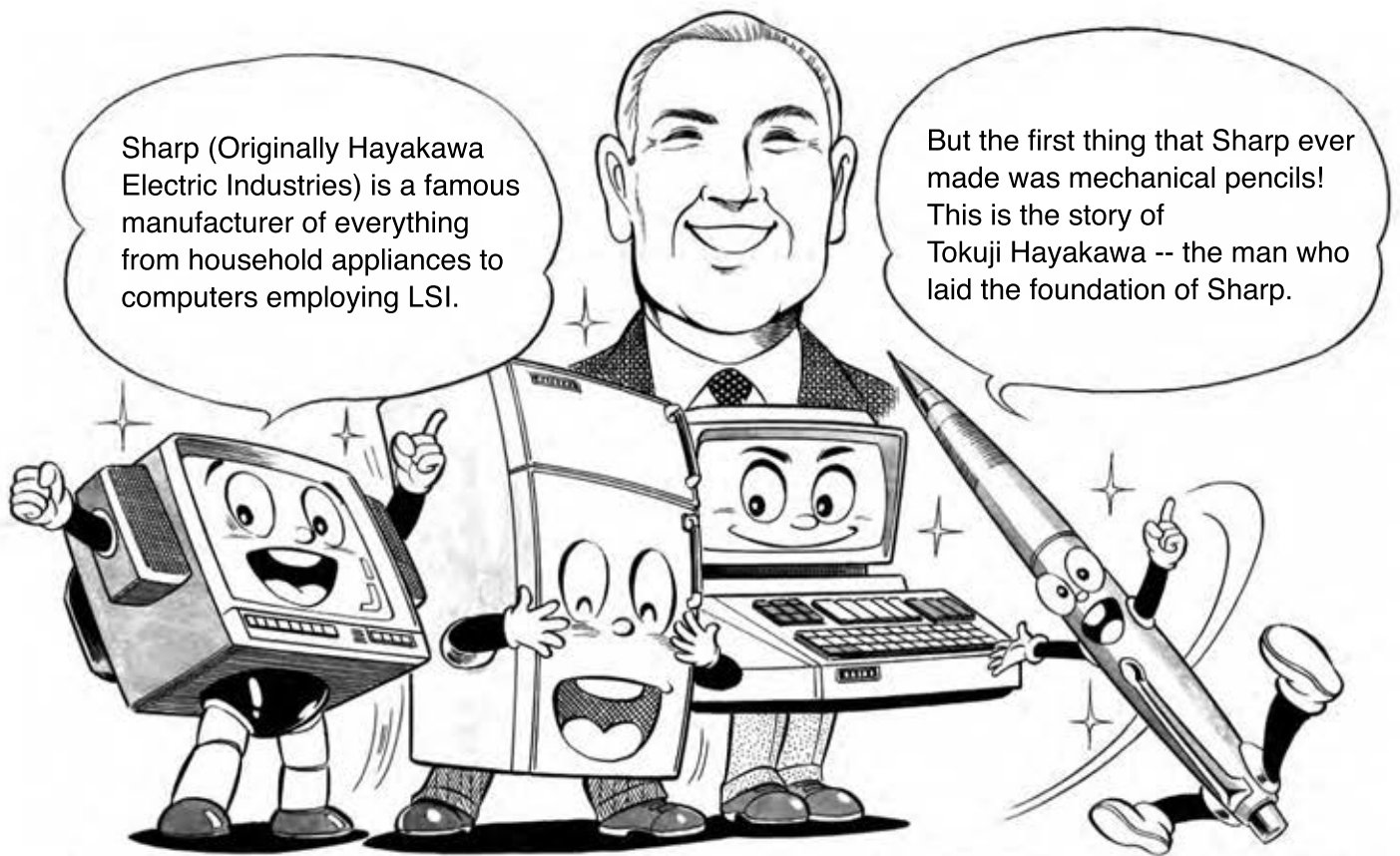


IT ALL BEGAN WITH SHARP PENCILS

-The Tokuji Hayakawa Story-

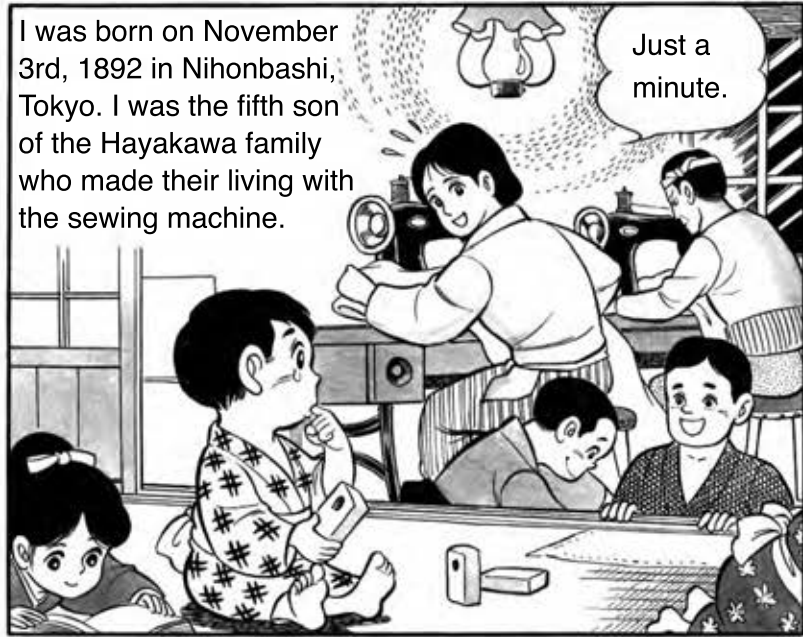
Written & Illustrated by
Sentaro Kubota & Eiji Imamichi





Sharp (Originally Hayakawa Electric Industries) is a famous manufacturer of everything from household appliances to computers employing LSI.

But the first thing that Sharp ever made was mechanical pencils! This is the story of Tokuji Hayakawa -- the man who laid the foundation of Sharp.

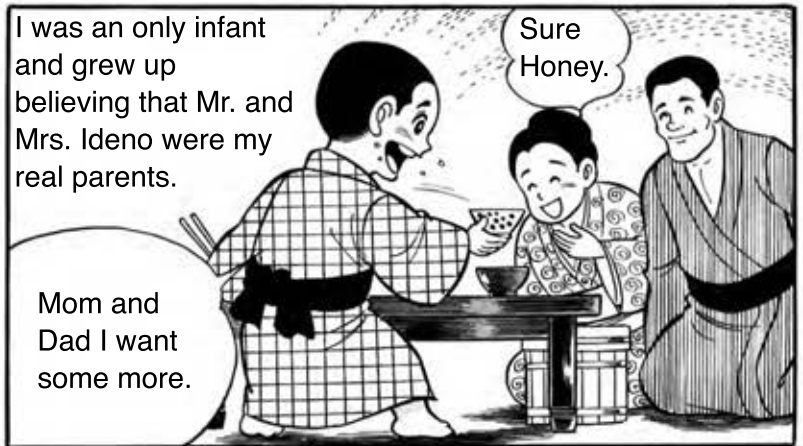


I was born on November 3rd, 1892 in Nihonbashi, Tokyo. I was the fifth son of the Hayakawa family who made their living with the sewing machine.

Just a minute.



Soon thereafter, my mother Hana became ill from fatigue, so I was adopted by the Ideno family.



I was an only infant and grew up believing that Mr. and Mrs. Ideno were my real parents.

Sure Honey.

Mom and Dad I want some more.



But two years later, my sweet foster mother became ill and passed away..

Foster mother: A mother who raises a child which is not her own. From "Me and Business" by Tokuji Hayakawa.

After that my foster father re-married and they had one child after another. The household finances became tight and my second mother treated me very harshly.



They only let me go to elementary school for one year and they didn't let me eat well. I helped with odd jobs, working late into the night pasting match boxes.



I was 9 years old and through the introduction of Mrs. Inoue, I went to work at the Sakata Metal Workshop.

Mr. Sakata, this is Tokuji Hayakawa, the boy I spoke with you about.

Well, here you are. Let's get to work.

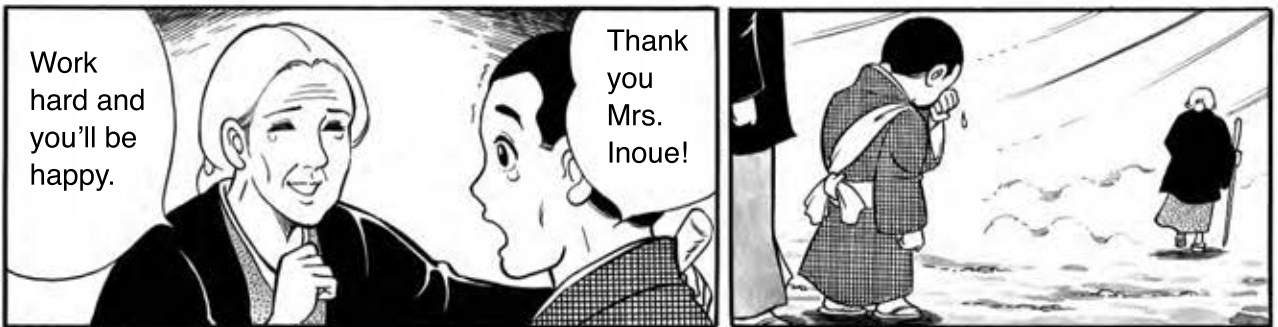
Do your best.

I will.



Work hard and you'll be happy.

Thank you Mrs. Inoue!



I began a long apprenticeship.

Let's get this cleaned up.

Hey Tokuji, get some more rice!

Okay.



My food was always burnt left-over rice, bean paste soup and pickles.



But at least I could eat 3 meals a day.



Apprenticeship: Serving a master as a worker for a fixed term.



Then one day at the Sakata workshop.

That's all you got?

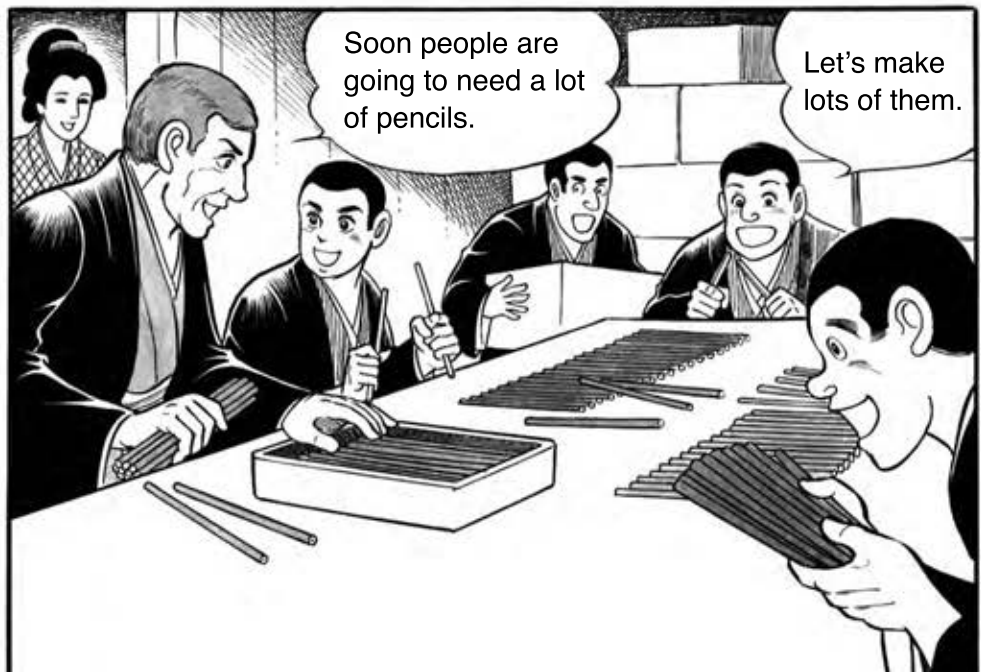
That's everything...

You little liar, where's the rest of it?

I didn't hide anything, mother!



In 1905, Japan won the Russo-Japanese war and industry expanded. I turned 16 and grew into an apprentice craftsman. The Sakata workshop started making pencils.

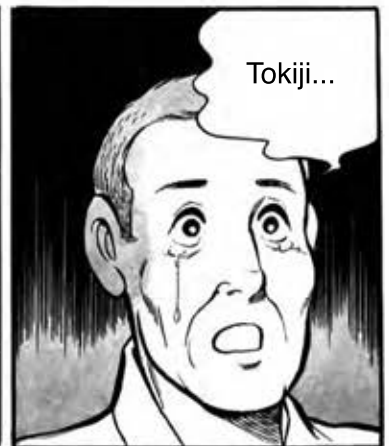




But some of the pencils were of inferior quality and we built up a heavy debt. Our master collapsed from the shock. I set up a small stall and started selling pencils at night.



At the hospital





In 1910, I turned 18. And when I gained my independence from the Sakata workshop, I learned that I had real parents and brothers and sisters.



The person who told me was Mr. Asada, the man from Nihonbashi where I went to get some raw metal.

That's right, we're actually cousins.

You mean me?!



Yes... I couldn't bring myself to tell you before. But your real mother and father - Hana and Sekichi Hayakawa died when you were seven.

What!



But you still have a brother Seiji, and a sister, Toriko.

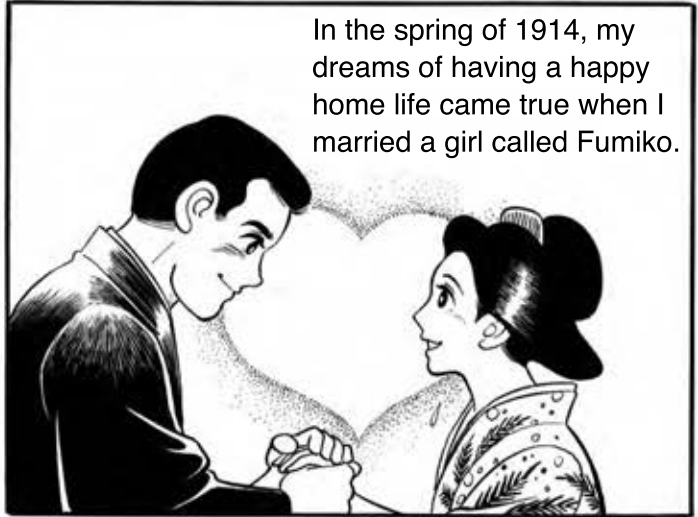


That was the happiest day of my life. I also learned that I had another big brother Hikotaro, and a big sister, Shizuko.

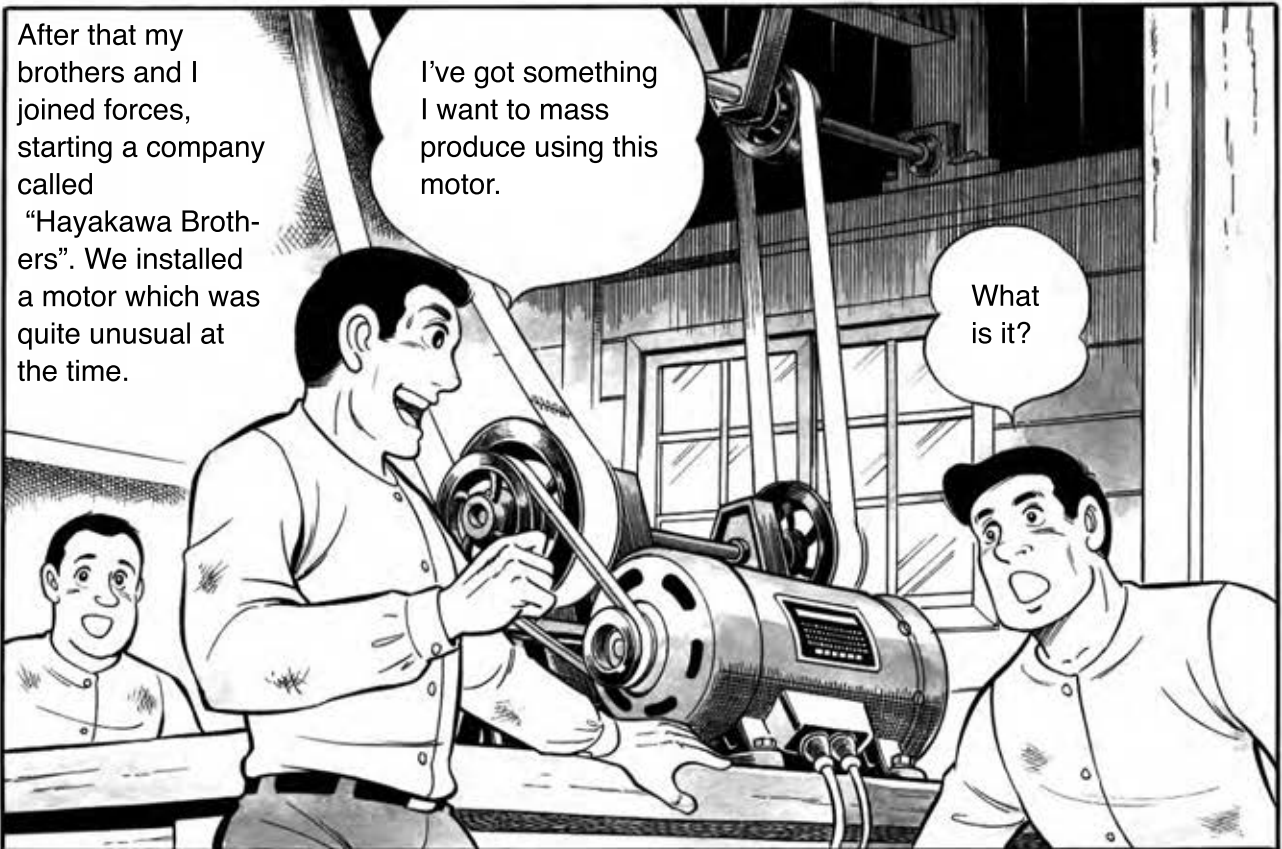
Tokuji!



Finally the Meiji era came to a close, and in the first year of the Taisyo era (1912), I started a small shop where we worked hard making belt buckles.



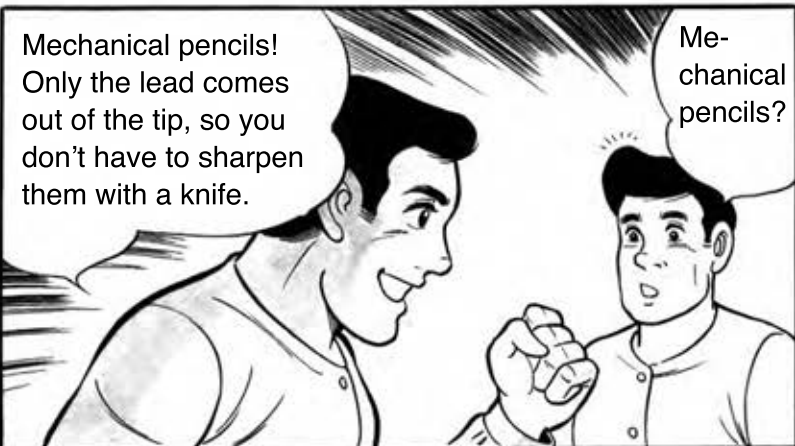
In the spring of 1914, my dreams of having a happy home life came true when I married a girl called Fumiko.



After that my brothers and I joined forces, starting a company called "Hayakawa Brothers". We installed a motor which was quite unusual at the time.

I've got something I want to mass produce using this motor.

What is it?

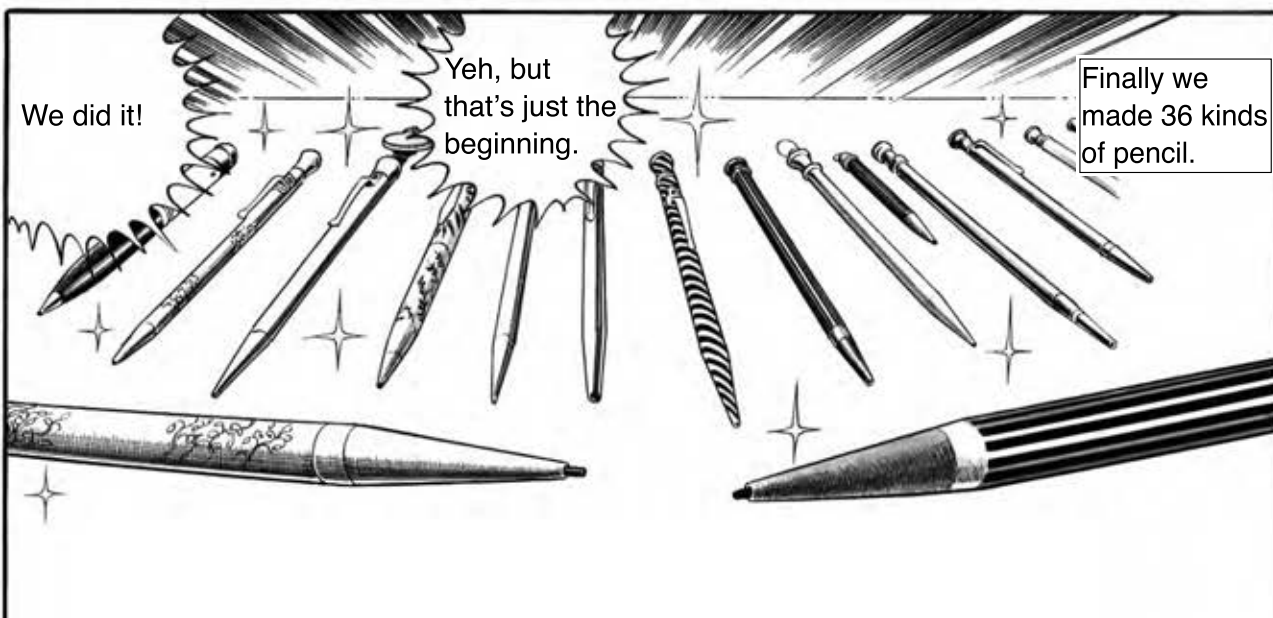
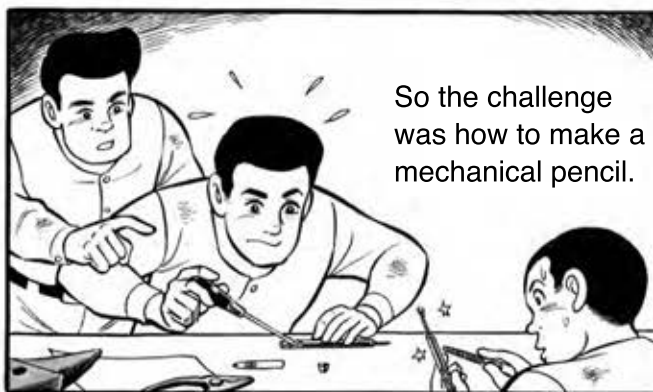
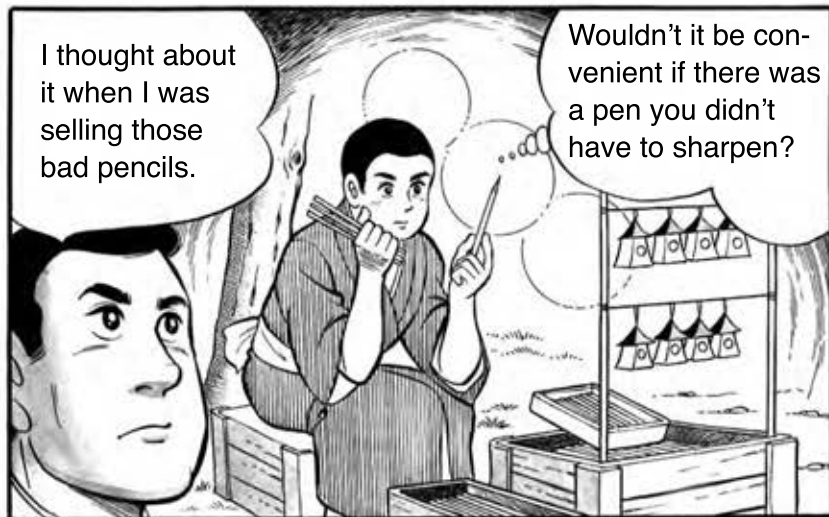


Mechanical pencils! Only the lead comes out of the tip, so you don't have to sharpen them with a knife.

Mechanical pencils?



Back when I was working at Sakata's, we put out some defective pencils and had a lot of trouble.





Hello!
We're the
Hayakawa
Brothers.

We'd like you to sell
our new product in your
shop.
It's called a mechanical
(Sharp) pencil.

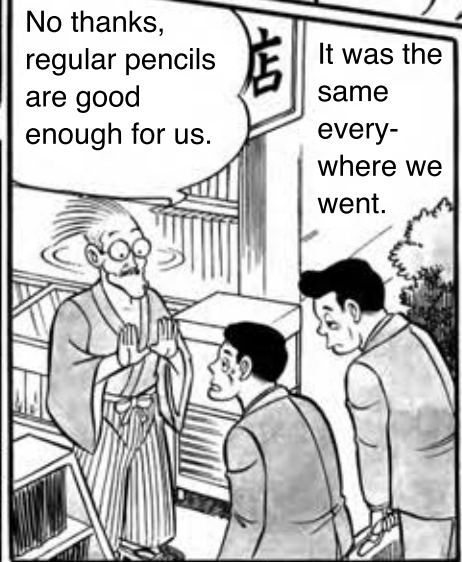


HMMMMM



I've already got
fountain pens and
these things cost
too much.

I can't sell
these odd-
ball con-
traptions.



No thanks,
regular pencils
are good
enough for us.

It was the
same
every-
where we
went.



It's a
cruel
world.



Hey Tokuji,
your wife's just
had a baby!

What?!



I became a father.

Congratulations.



Okay.

Now I've got to work for this child too. Tokuji.



Tokuji!



We got a huge order from overseas.

Our Sharp pencils are a hit overseas!

"We did it."



I'll pay anything.

Mr. Hayakawa, gimme some Sharp pencils!

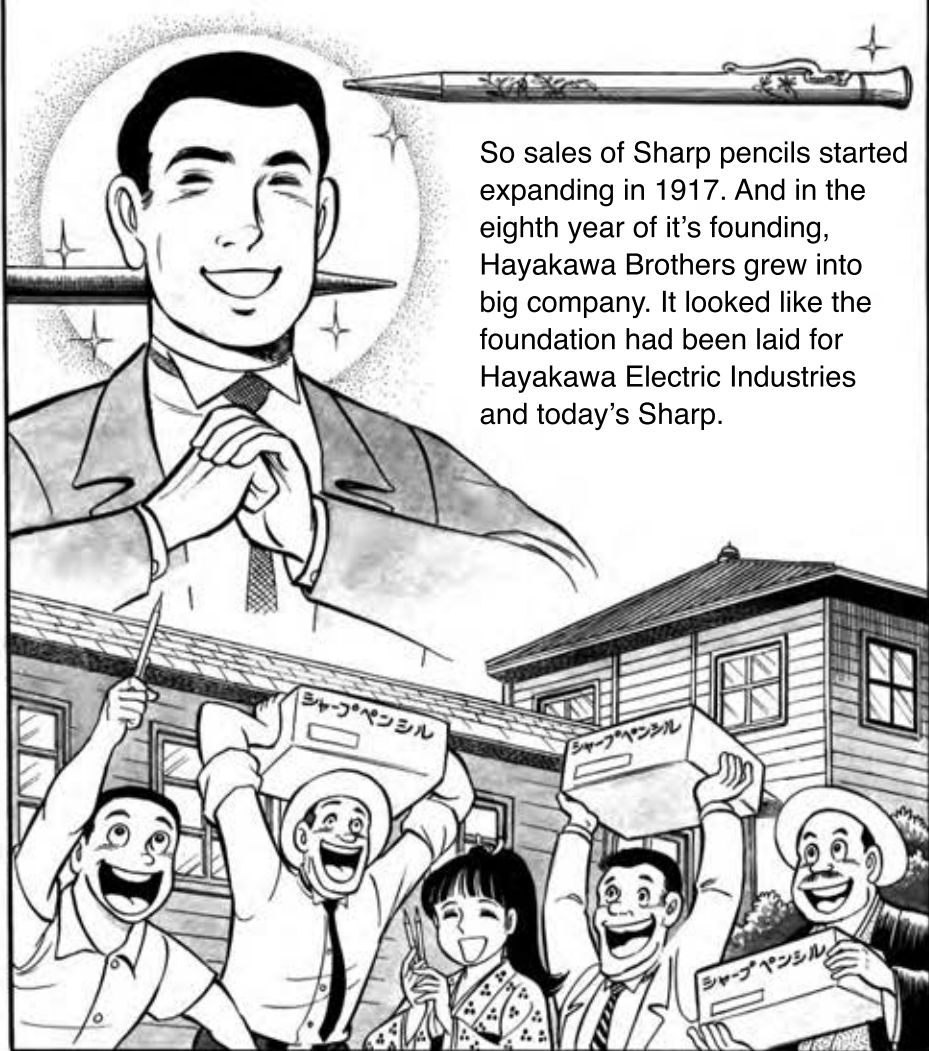
Sorry about what happened before.

We got it.



I'm glad we didn't give up! If you make good products then you'll always be able to sell them to someday.

That's all it took. Now all of the wholesalers and retailers wanted a piece of the action.



So sales of Sharp pencils started expanding in 1917. And in the eighth year of it's founding, Hayakawa Brothers grew into big company. It looked like the foundation had been laid for Hayakawa Electric Industries and today's Sharp.



It was an earthquake worse than anyone had ever seen and everybody lost everything. It was the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923.



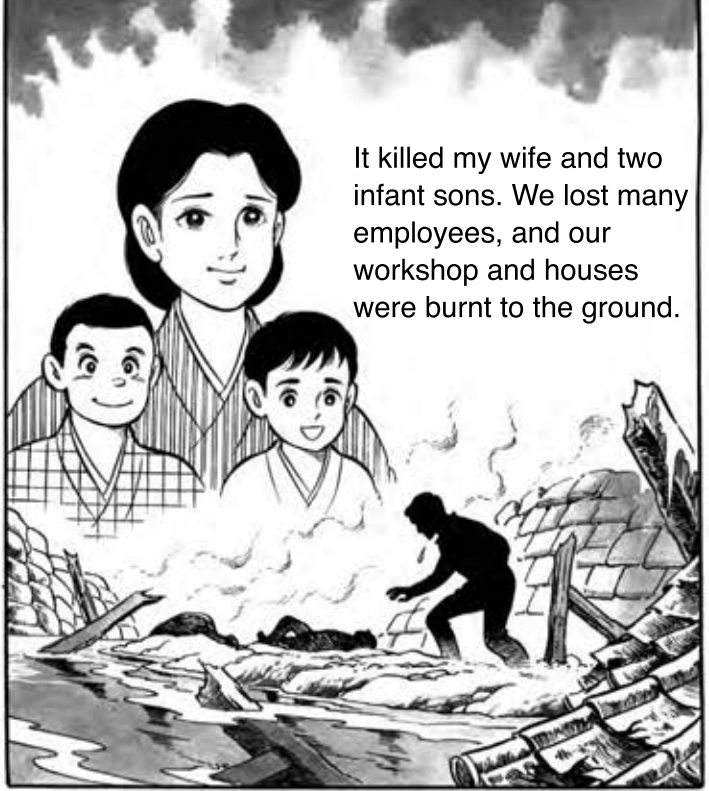
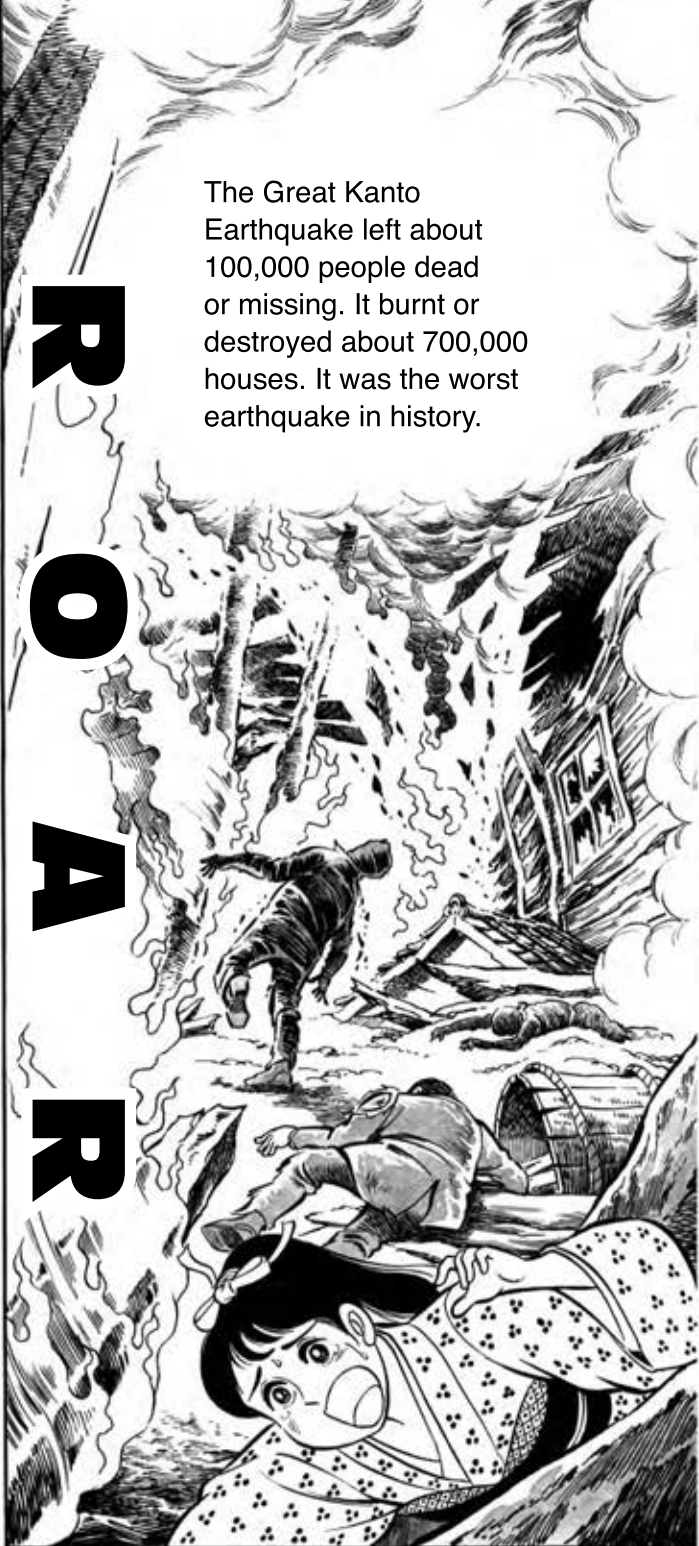
It's an earthquake...

RUN!!

RUMBULE

R O A R

The Great Kanto Earthquake left about 100,000 people dead or missing. It burnt or destroyed about 700,000 houses. It was the worst earthquake in history.



It killed my wife and two infant sons. We lost many employees, and our workshop and houses were burnt to the ground.



We can't grieve forever. I'm thinking of going to Osaka.

Time passed



To tell the truth, we've got a debt of 20,000 yen to Japan Stationary in Osaka, the company that's been selling Sharp pencils.

They said that if we teach them how to make Sharp pencils, they'll take us on as employees.

What do you want to do?

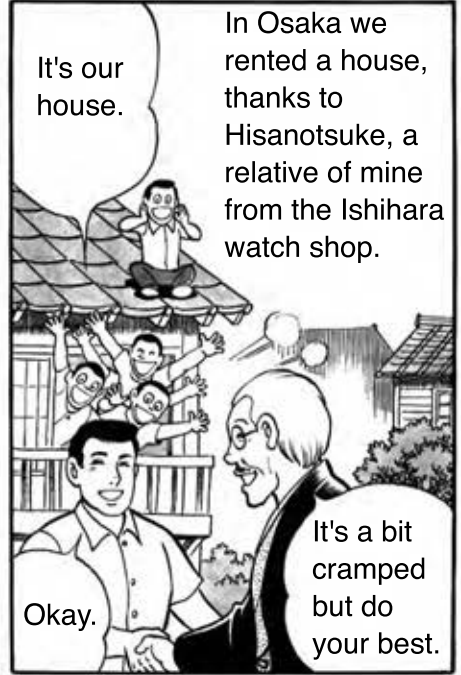


20,000 yen=10 million yen in today's terms.



We'll go with you, Mr. Hayakawa. Let us go with you to Osaka!

Thank You.



It's our house.

In Osaka we rented a house, thanks to Hisanotsuke, a relative of mine from the Ishihara watch shop.

Okay.

It's a bit cramped but do your best.



This is too cramped.

Hey what can we do.

Tomorrow we start work, so get some sleep.

Hey your feet stink.



We immediately set to work teaching the people at Japan Stationary how to make Sharp pencils.

Okay, here you have to do this.

Well then do it.

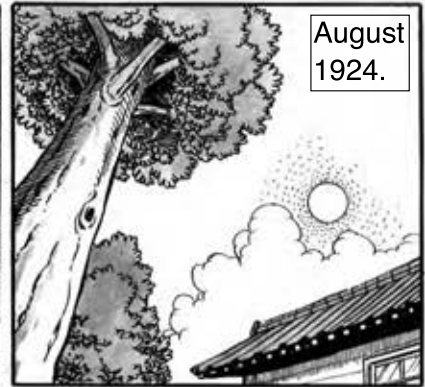


The native sons of Tokyo didn't like to be badgered by the people from Osaka, but we persevered.

As a result of our enthusiastic teaching, the work in the shop could now proceed without me.



They've got it now.

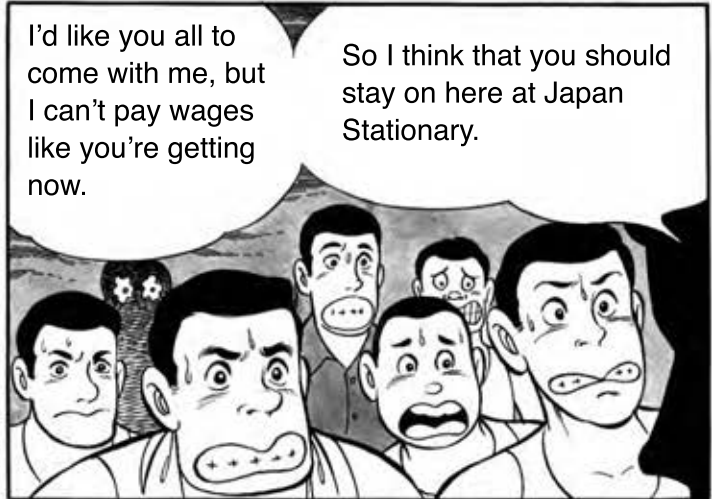


August 1924.



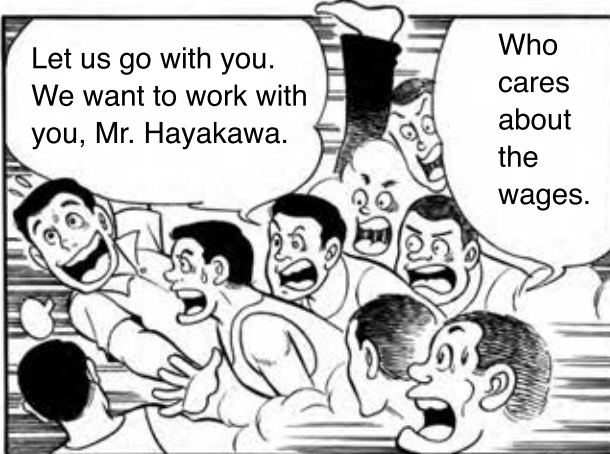
I'm going to quit Japan Stationary and go it alone.

What???



I'd like you all to come with me, but I can't pay wages like you're getting now.

So I think that you should stay on here at Japan Stationary.



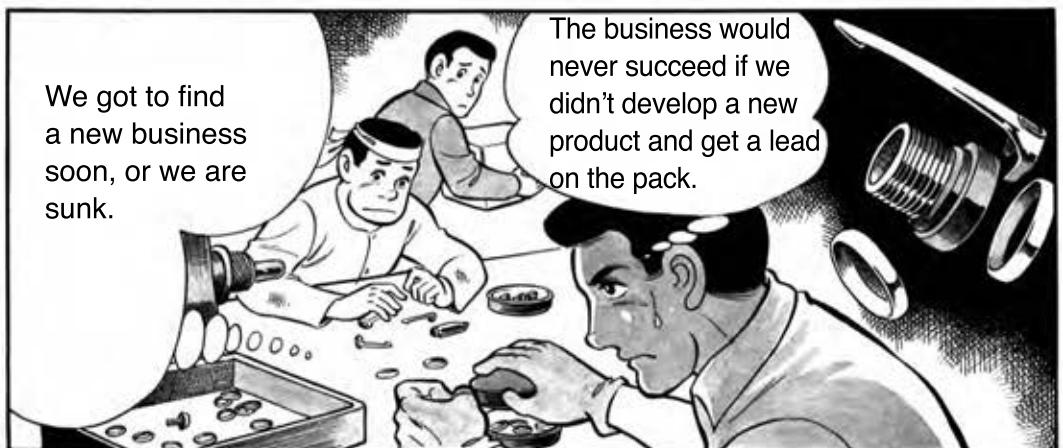
Let us go with you. We want to work with you, Mr. Hayakawa.

Who cares about the wages.



In the end Kawamoto and two others came with me. We built a little workshop and started again.

But now Japan Stationary had the rights to make Sharp Pencils, so we could only manufacture fittings and clips for fountain pens.



We got to find a new business soon, or we are sunk.

The business would never succeed if we didn't develop a new product and get a lead on the pack.



Then one day I got an idea at the Ishihara watch shop.



Hisanotsuke, what's that?

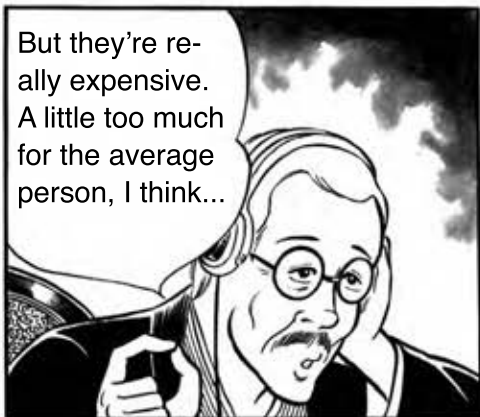


It's a crystal radio from America. They're getting popular all over the world. Even I ordered a couple.

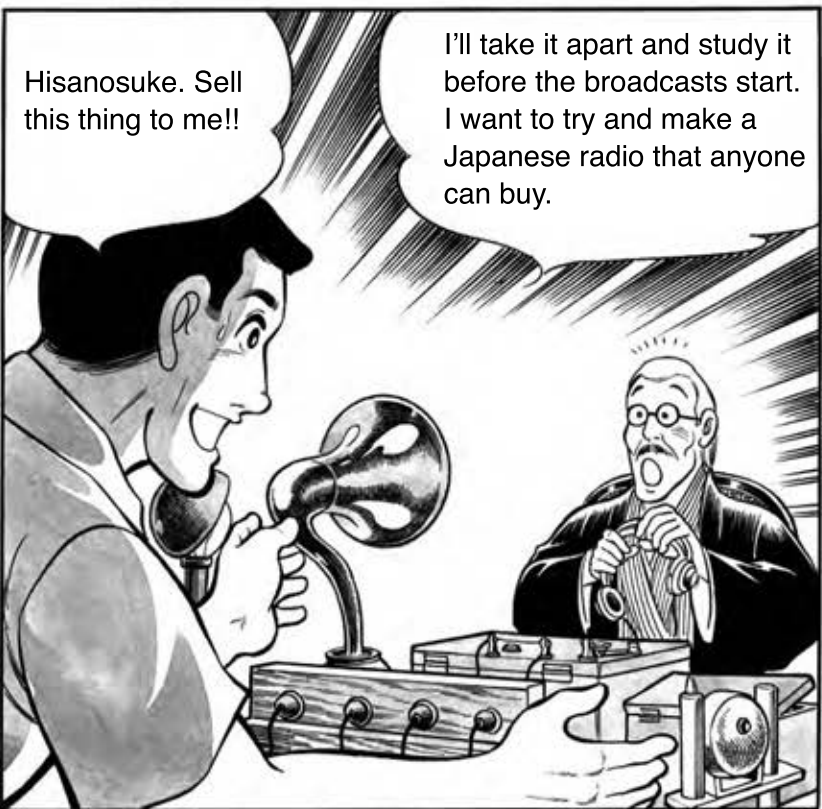


Radio!

They're going to start broadcasting in Tokyo next year. And when that happens everyone is going to want one.



But they're really expensive. A little too much for the average person, I think...



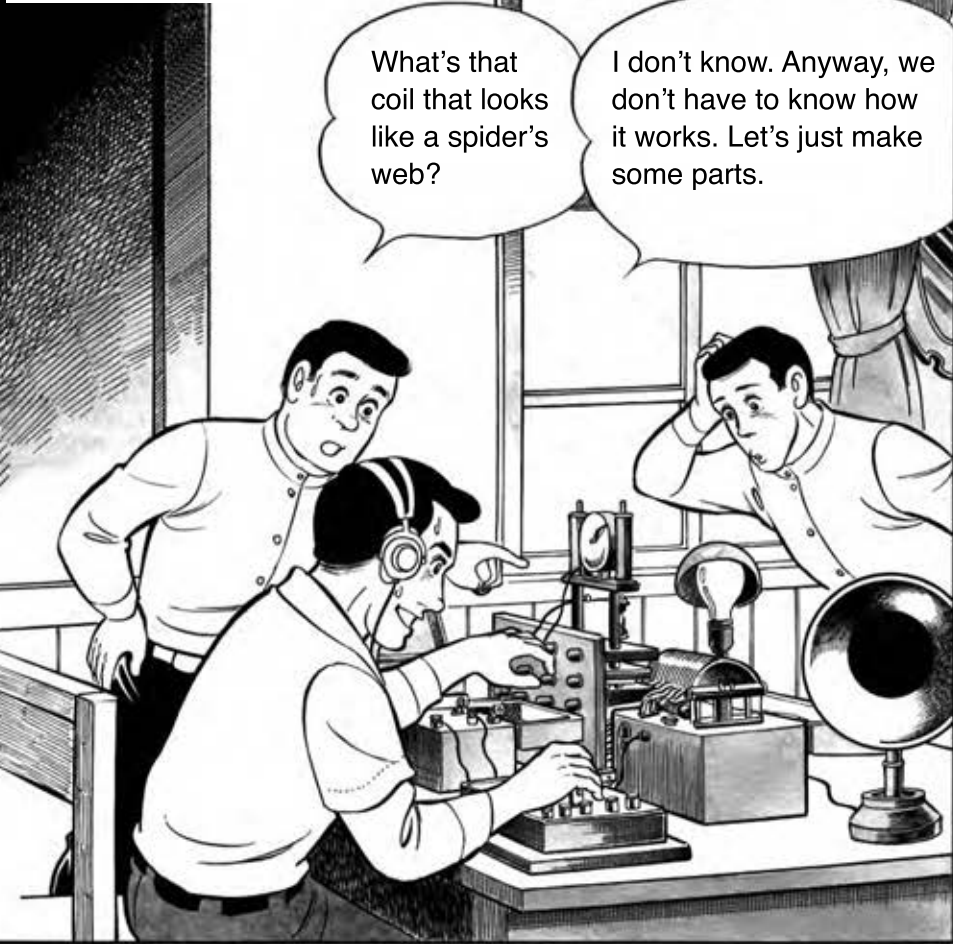
Hisanosuke. Sell this thing to me!!

I'll take it apart and study it before the broadcasts start. I want to try and make a Japanese radio that anyone can buy.



Okay I sold it. Make something great, Tokuji.

I will.



What's that coil that looks like a spider's web?

I don't know. Anyway, we don't have to know how it works. Let's just make some parts.

It was very easy to say, but we didn't know anything about electricity and we had to make all the parts from scratch. It was a monstrous task.



In February of 1925, we finally succeeded in building a small crystal radio set.



Then in June, Osaka followed Tokyo into broadcasting.



How's it going?



Can you hear anything?

Shhhh.



Hello, we are now broadcasting from Osaka.

Whoa, I can hear it! I can hear it perfectly!



We did it, we really did it!



This is the first radio ever made in Japan. We started with Sharp pencils, let's call it the Sharp radio.



The Sharp radio sold quickly. They were literally flying off the shelves.

Wow! Now we can listen to the radio.



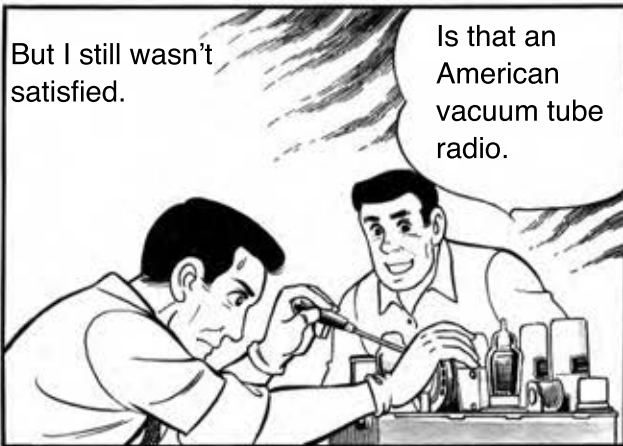
When we started making 100,000 units a month, we couldn't handle the orders. Soon my friends from Tokyo who had gone over to Japan Stationary all returned. The business was a beehive of activity again.



At the end of that year, I re-married to a woman named Kotoko and regained the family life that I had lost.



In the following year, radio sales were so good that we built a new factory.



But I still wasn't satisfied.

Is that an American vacuum tube radio.



Yep... The crystal era is soon going to be over.

The next step is the tube era, where you won't need an earphone, and lots of people can listen at the same time.



It's like the old motto, eh? 'Develop new products and stay one step ahead of the pack'.

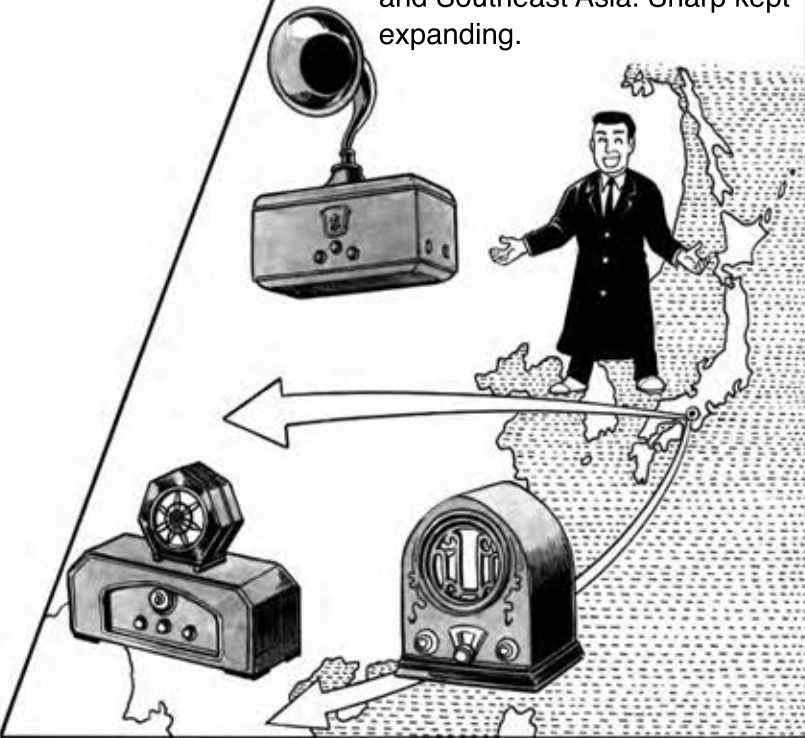


You got it... A business won't expand if you forget that.

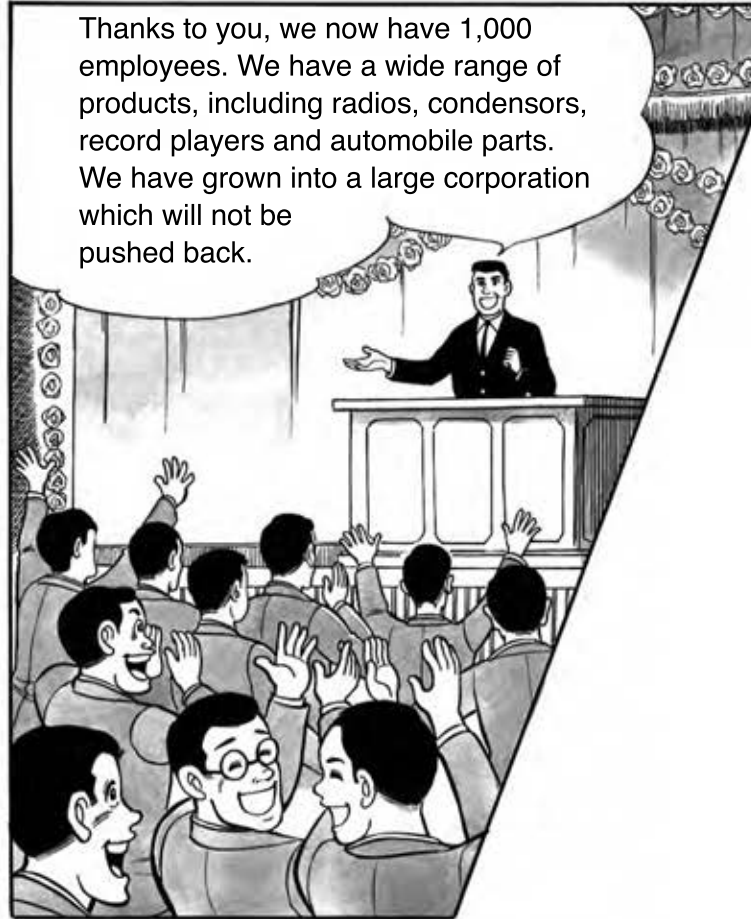
At the end of that year, the Emperor Taisho passed away, and we entered the Showa era. But in 1927 and 1928, business conditions rapidly deteriorated and many firms in the radio industry went bankrupt. Only Sharp was able to keep building new factories and expanding production.



Around this time, Sharp's pioneering vacuum tube radios were making their way out of Japan, through exports to China and Southeast Asia. Sharp kept expanding.



Thanks to you, we now have 1,000 employees. We have a wide range of products, including radios, condensers, record players and automobile parts. We have grown into a large corporation which will not be pushed back.



Our triumph, however, was short lived. In 1941, Japan plunged into the horror of World War II. Under the orders of the army, we were forced to make radio sets for 5 years.



For a few years after Japan's defeat, everyone's main concern was just to find enough to eat.



Hey come here.

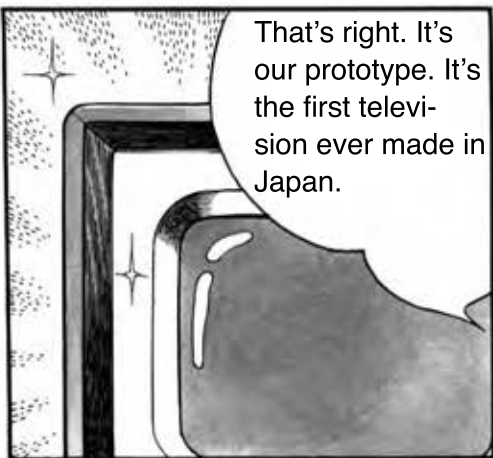
We started to make radios again, but at the same time there was a bigger challenge on the horizon.





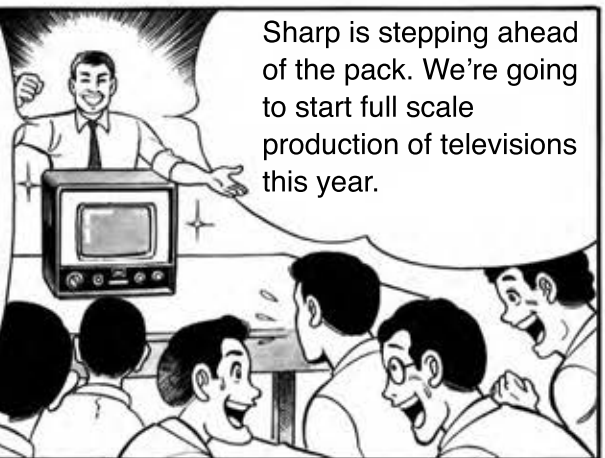
You know what that is?

It's a t.. te...
Television!!



That's right. It's our prototype. It's the first television ever made in Japan.

In 1953, just two years from now, Japan is going to start television broadcasts.



Sharp is stepping ahead of the pack. We're going to start full scale production of televisions this year.



Hooray!

Hooray!

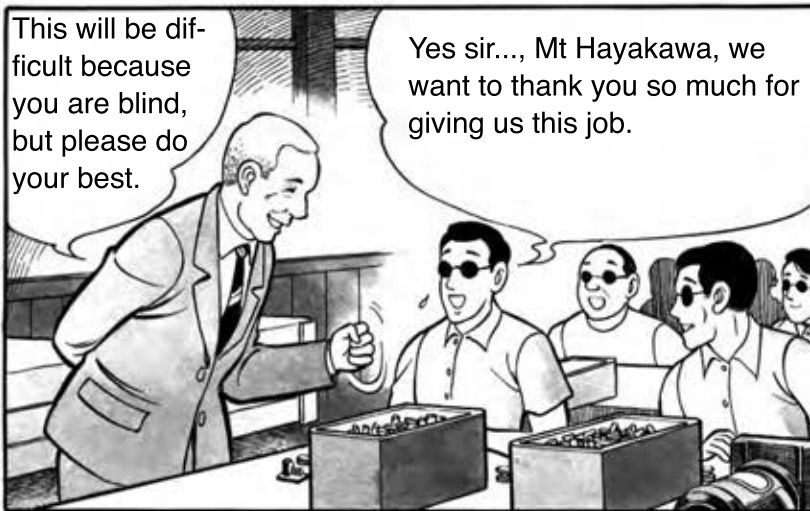
So Sharp took the lead in the television era, opening the way to the company's prosperity today.



Ever since I was a struggling child, I always faced new challenges with my motto 'To succeed you must stay one step ahead of the pack'.



On the other hand, I never wanted to turn my back on the less fortunate.



This will be difficult because you are blind, but please do your best.

Yes sir..., Mt Hayakawa, we want to thank you so much for giving us this job.



But why are you being so kind to us?



Because when I was a child, an old blind woman named Inoue helped me.



I owe everything I have today to her.

I want to pay back my gratitude to you.

I knew the suffering of my family. When I was a child, I was separated from my parents, and I lost my wife and child in the Great Kanto Earthquake. So I started my own school, with 100 beautiful children who loved me dearly.

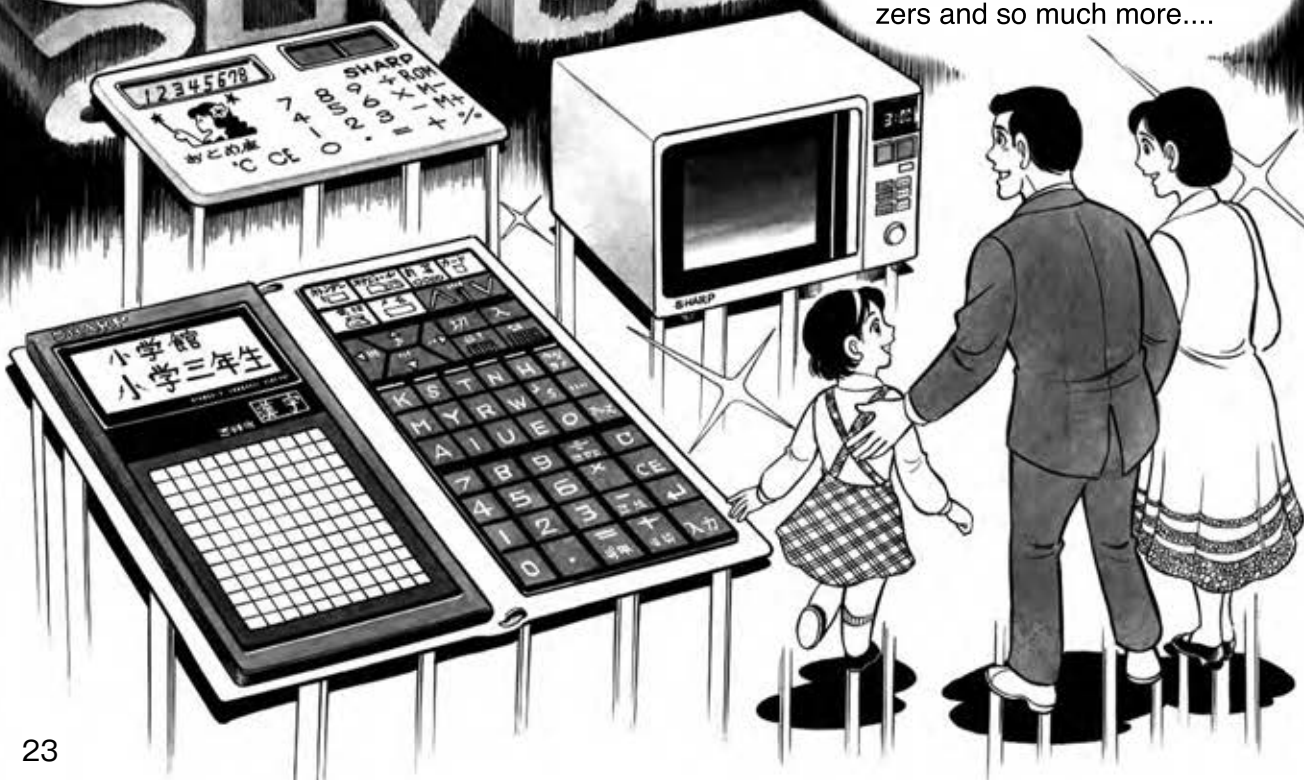


At home I was blessed with a beautiful wife and daughter.



SHARP

After that the founder -- Tokui Hayakawa -- retired, and in 1980 he passed away, leaving Sharp forever. However, his motto lives on at Sharp. 'Develop new products and stay one step ahead of the pack'. Today his philosophy survives in our wide range of outstanding products -- microwave ovens, calculators, electronic organizers and so much more....



Sharp has always stayed one step ahead of the times. Today we are deploying our state of the art technology to develop ultra thin liquid crystal televisions, voice activated word processors and TV phones. The day is not far off when all of these futuristic products will be a part of our lives.

Ultra-thin liquid crystal televisions: This television is so thin that you can hang it on the wall like a painting.

TV Phones: With these telephone, you can see live images of the person you are talking to.

Voice activated word processors: Just face the word processor and speak, and your voice turns into written words.

