佐吉の志

Sakichi's Aspiration

豊田佐吉はどのような志を抱いて自動織機開発の道に進んでいったのでしょうか。 「発明私記」*1や原田晃*2著「豊田佐吉翁に聴く」などを手掛かりに、ひも解いてみましょう。

What ambition inspired Sakichi Toyoda to progress along the path of developing the automatic loom? Books such as *Hatsumei Shiki (The Invention Journal)**1 and Akira Haraguchi's *Toyoda Sakichi ni Kiku (Listening to Sakichi Toyoda)**2 help us answer this question.

信条 Belief 豊田佐吉は1867(慶応3)年、現在の静岡県湖西市の生まれ。 開国して海外から大量の技術や製品が流入し、「自分が頑張って、 世のため人のために尽したい」という熱い想いを持った明治の青年 の一人でした。国家社会に奉仕することはこの地方に伝わっていた 報徳思想*から、貫き通す強い精神力は日蓮宗の影響を受けたと 言われています。

※報徳思想:二宮尊徳が広めた「私利私欲を戒め経済と道徳の融和を重んじる」考え方で、「至誠(きわめて誠実なこと)、勤労、分度(自分の分に合った生活をすること)、推譲(分を超えるものは国家社会に奉仕すること)」を4綱領としています。

Sakichi Toyoda was born in 1867 in what is now Kosai City, Shizuoka. When Japan ended its isolation new technologies and products flowed in from other countries, Sakichi was one of the many passionate Meiji-era young men who desired to "do our best, to serve society and our people." This desire is said to have originated from Hotoku Shiso* (Hotoku Thought) that was brought to this area. It is also said that the influence of the Nichiren Sect of Buddhism greatly strengthened their determination.

*Hotoku Shiso (Hotoku Thought):the belief of "respecting the harmony of the economy and the moral commandments of self-interest" spread by Sontoku Ninomiya. It consists of four principles; sincerity (being sincere), work, modesty (living within your means), and contributing (giving one's best to society and one's country).

少年の頃の思想 Idea in Boyhood 14~15歳の時より、国家の為に尽すには如何なる事が最も良いかと考慮を重ね、当初土地の埋め立て開墾を考えましたが、真に国土を拡張することにはならないことに気付き、「大海に島を作るよりほか策は無く自分には到底不可能である」とあきらめます。改めて考慮を重ねていた時の1885(明治18)年に専売特許条例の発布を知り、「是れあるかな」、人間の頭の中から、これまで世の中にないものを考え出す法律だという事を聞いて、太平洋に島を築くと同様の事業を奨励する勅命と考え、一生を通じて発明に志すことを決意します。

From the age of 14 or 15 years, Sakichi considered over and over how best to serve his country. At first, he wanted to increase Japan's land area but then realized that doing so would not be possible. He admitted that "there is no way other than making islands in the ocean, which I cannot do." In 1885, still thinking about serving his country, he came across and looked into the promulgating of patent regulations. He learned there were laws regarding new ideas about things that didn't yet exist. He considered this to be a calling as important as creating islands in the Pacific Ocean, so he decided to devote his life to inventing.

動力織機

発明を志したものの、何を発明したらよいか分かりません。高価な 石炭に代わる原動力として無限動力(永久機関)の発明を考えたり、 電気のことも考えたりしましたが、自分には到底不可能な事として断 念しています。当時政府は殖産興業のひとつとして紡績機械を輸入 し、各地に工場を作り起業を奨励しました。佐吉は、老人や子供の 仕事である糸紡ぎが機械化されているのに、一人前の婦人の仕事 である織布は手仕事のままで、内外にも動力織機は無かったことか ら、専ら動力織機の発明に注力することを決意します。

これについて原口晃は、その著「豊田佐吉翁に聴く」で佐吉が以下のように述べたとしています。

「(前略)(機織りを見ていて)此の機は日本中皆使って居る。是を改良して動力で動かすことになれば、確かにこれまでのものよりも早く織り上げられることになる。沢山に織れる。安く織り上げることになる。買う人が安い木綿が買えることになる。そうなると、大変に世の中の為になる。これほどお国の為になるものはないと、考えは美れから夫れへと進んで、遂に織機の改良発明と云うことに方向を決めて仕舞った。」

Though he aspired to invent, he didn't know what to invent. He considered infinite power (perpetual motion) that might replace high-priced coal, and he thought about developing electricity; however, he abandoned these because they were beyond him. At that time, as a part of its policy to promote industrial development, the national government was importing spinning machines and encouraging the building of plants and the starting of businesses in regional areas. Sakichi thought that since spinning, which had been done by children and the elderly, could be mechanized, then fabric weaving, which was being done manually by women, should also be able to be mechanized. Since there were no powered looms in or outside Japan he decided to focus on inventing one.

In his book, Toyoda Sakichi ni Kiku, Akira Haraguchi noted that Sakichi stated, "(Looking at a hand loom) everyone in Japan is using this machine. If weaving can be improved and powered, weaving will definitely be quicker. Much more will be woven. Costs will decrease. Purchasers will buy lower-priced cotton fabric. That will benefit society. There isn't anything else I can do to better serve the country." Thinking this way he mapped out a path to improve the loom."

He devoted his life to inventing a powered loom. He realized that stopping the loom to start the next weft after the previous weft ran out was the biggest obstacle to improving the efficiency of weaving. So, he focused on inventing a powered loom that automatically supplied the weft.

自動織機の着想 Idea of an Automatic Loom これ以降、豊田佐吉は生涯を動力織機の発明にささげていきます。 その開発の中で、よこ糸が尽きる度に織機の運転を止め、よこ糸を 取り替えることが効率を上げられない最大の原因と考え、自動的に これを補給する自動織機の発明に邁進していったのでした。

※1:発明私記 豊田佐吉が発明一筋に生きた自分の一生について記述したもので、幼少のころからの自分の体験、考え方や深く反省する点などを弟子へのいましめとして残そうと考え、1926年に書かれたもの。
*1: Hatsumei Shiki (The Invention Journal) This is a summary of Sakichi Toyoda's lifelong devotion to inventing. He wrote it in 1926 to leave to his apprentices lessons from his experience as a boyhood, his thoughts, and his reflections.

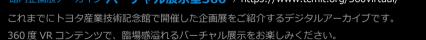
※2:原口晃 豊田自動織機製作所 元常務取締役。プラット社へのG型自動織機特許譲渡契約の際には渡英して豊田喜一郎とともに交渉にあたる。帰国後退任するが、豊田佐吉逝去の報を受け、佐吉の言葉を残そうと「豊田佐吉翁に聴く」を記す。

*2: Akira Haraguchi Former Executive Managing Officer of Toyoda Automatic Loom Works, Ltd. When the patent transfer agreement for the Type G Automatic Loom was signed with Platt Bros & Co Ltd, he went to the UK with Kiichiro Toyoda to negotiate the terms and retired after returning.

After learning that Sakichi Toyoda had died, to preserve Sakichi's words, he wrote Toyoda Sakichi rikiku (Listening to Sakichi Toyoda).



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