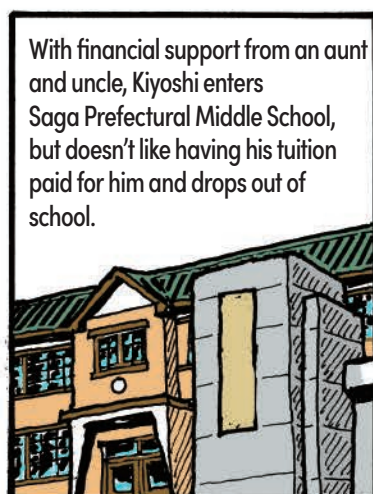
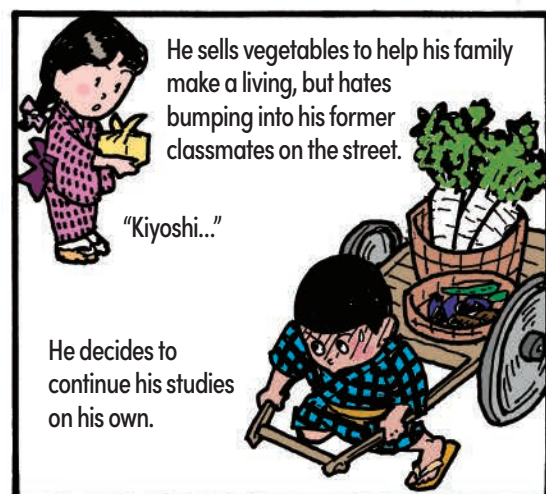
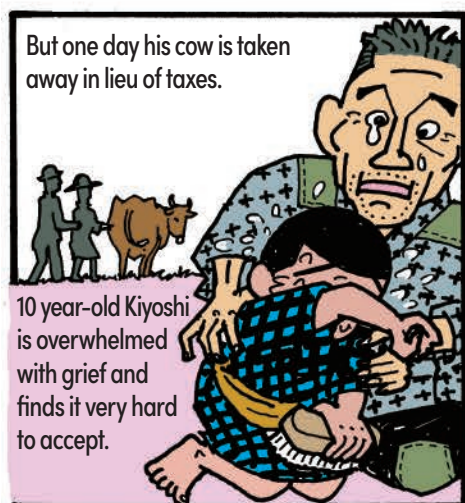


# まんが 市村清 物語

## Kiyoshi Ichimura: A Graphic Biography



Born in 1900, Ricoh San-Ai Group founder Kiyoshi Ichimura was like a breath of bracing fresh air to 20th century Japan. The first-born son of a poor farming family, he overcame many hardships and founded a series of businesses. This graphic biography depicts how he engaged forcefully with life, armed with plenty of ideas and a propensity for hard work.

Illustrations by Saiki Sugiura



Idealistic and ambitious, he moves to Tokyo.  
1919. Transferred to the Tokyo Head Office.

"Keep up the good work, sir."

"I can tell you'll go far."

He studies intently while on the move for his job.  
April 1920. Gets into Chuo University.

"Right, I'm going to study hard in Tokyo!"

"My bicycle tires need a bit more air in them"

"Just nip out to the station"

"Yes, sir"

"Yes, sir"

"Go and get me some cigarettes"

"Yes, sir"

1916. Starts work as a "trainee clerk" at the Kurume Branch of Kyoei Chokin Bank, but in fact is just a gofer.

Promotion to company director and acting branch manager.

1922. Starts working for Daito Bank (in Beijing) and is transferred to the Shanghai Branch the following year.

"Principles and ideology are important, but if you carry on like this you're going to die of TB, you know."

He has developed pulmonary tuberculosis. He accepts that he might die, but begins a regime to boost his resistance.

His misgivings about wealth inequality lead to a keen interest in communism. One day, he is summoned by a local priest.

TB

Ichimura spends a lot of time reading. He also makes a shogi set at the request of his cellmate. He makes a board out of a wooden pillow and the pieces out of toilet roll centers. Kiyoshi learns how much fun it is to create something out of nothing.

"This is brilliant, Mr. Ichimura."

"What a great way to pass the time."

1927. Daito Bank is closed down due to the impact of the Showa Financial Crisis. Ichimura spends five months in prison, suspected of embezzlement.

Daito Bank

Arrest Warrant

1925. Marries Yukie Matsuoka.

Ichimura's 69th day in Kumamoto. "Thank you for your sincerely written letters. I want to take out a policy." After that, sales improve rapidly nationwide.

"Yukie, I did it!"

"Ah, there you are. I was waiting for you to show up."

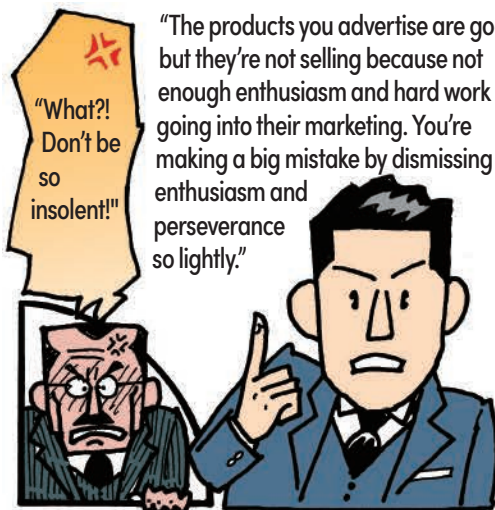
"You're not thinking about running away, are you? Just get out there and sell a policy. I know you can do it."

"Ooer!"

After his name is cleared, Ichimura returns to Japan. He starts working as an insurance salesman in Kumamoto, but initially has great difficulty in selling policies.

"This isn't going how I'd planned. We may have to do a moonlight flit..."



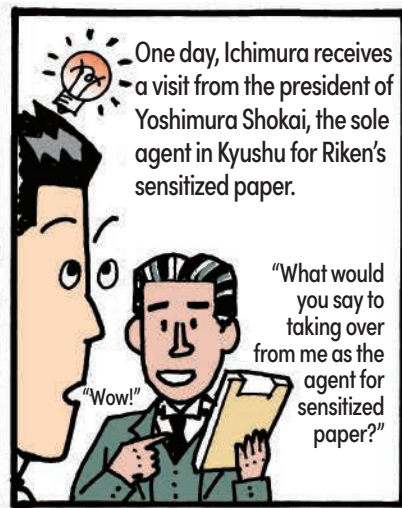


"The products you advertise are good, but they're not selling because not enough enthusiasm and hard work is going into their marketing. You're making a big mistake by dismissing my enthusiasm and perseverance so lightly."



"It has to be a top-class businessman with sufficient financial resources, so no. Kindly leave my office."

But Riken Head Office will not agree to transfer the rights to Ichimura, so he goes to Tokyo to negotiate in person.



One day, Ichimura receives a visit from the president of Yoshimura Shokai, the sole agent in Kyushu for Riken's sensitized paper.

"What would you say to taking over from me as the agent for sensitized paper?"



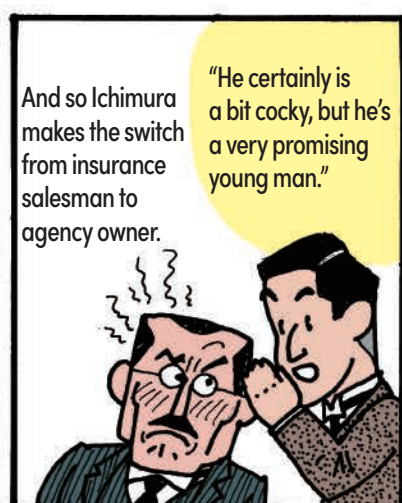
Ichimura wears many different hats: proprietor, negotiator, deliveryman, packer, etc. etc.



4444 is an easy number to remember.

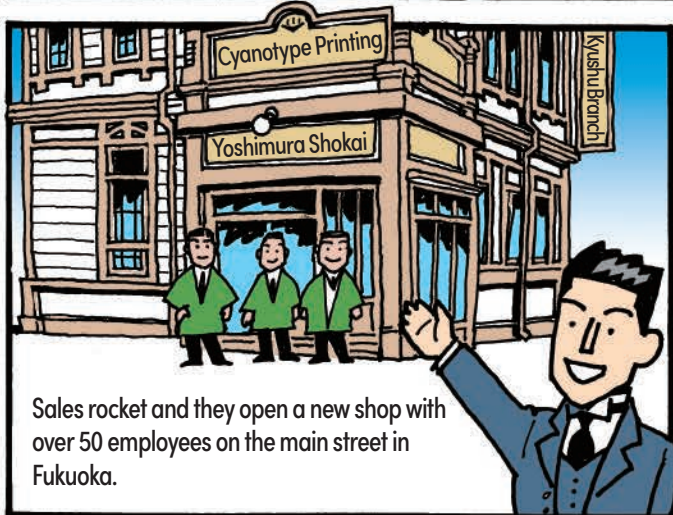
1929. Sets up shop in Fukuoka.

"Yoshimura Shokai. Good morning."

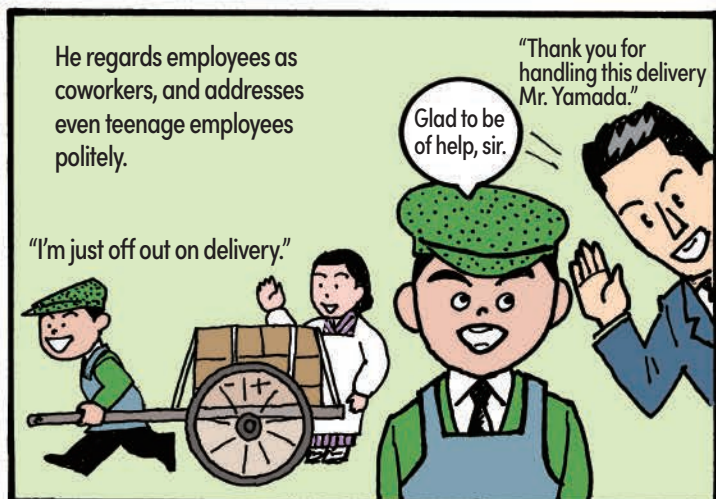


And so Ichimura makes the switch from insurance salesman to agency owner.

"He certainly is a bit cocky, but he's a very promising young man."



Sales rocket and they open a new shop with over 50 employees on the main street in Fukuoka.



He regards employees as coworkers, and addresses even teenage employees politely.

"Thank you for handling this delivery Mr. Yamada."

Glad to be of help, sir.

"I'm just off out on delivery."



The warm welcome given to Ichimura, a mere agent with no academic background to speak of, arouses the jealousy of the other managers, who had graduated from elite universities. They give him the cold shoulder.

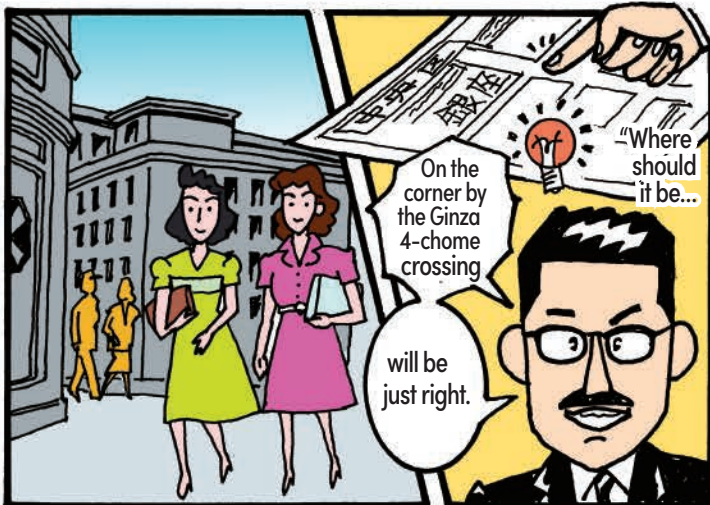
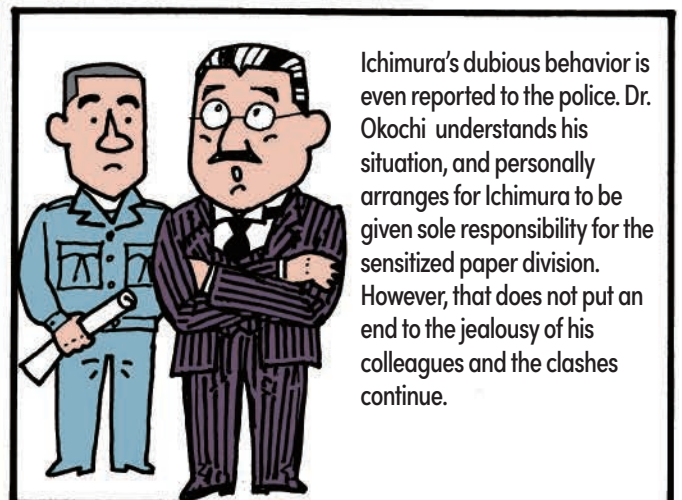
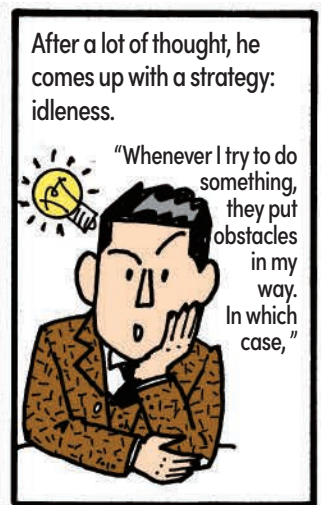


1933. Dr. Okochi, director of the Riken Institute, offers him a job as a manager in Tokyo.

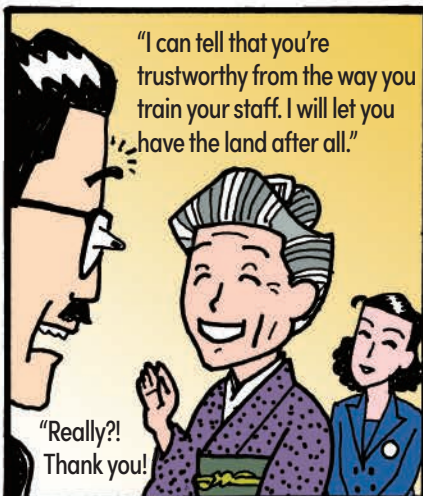
"Mr. Ichimura? This is Masatoshi Okochi."

"I'd really like you to come and work at Riken."

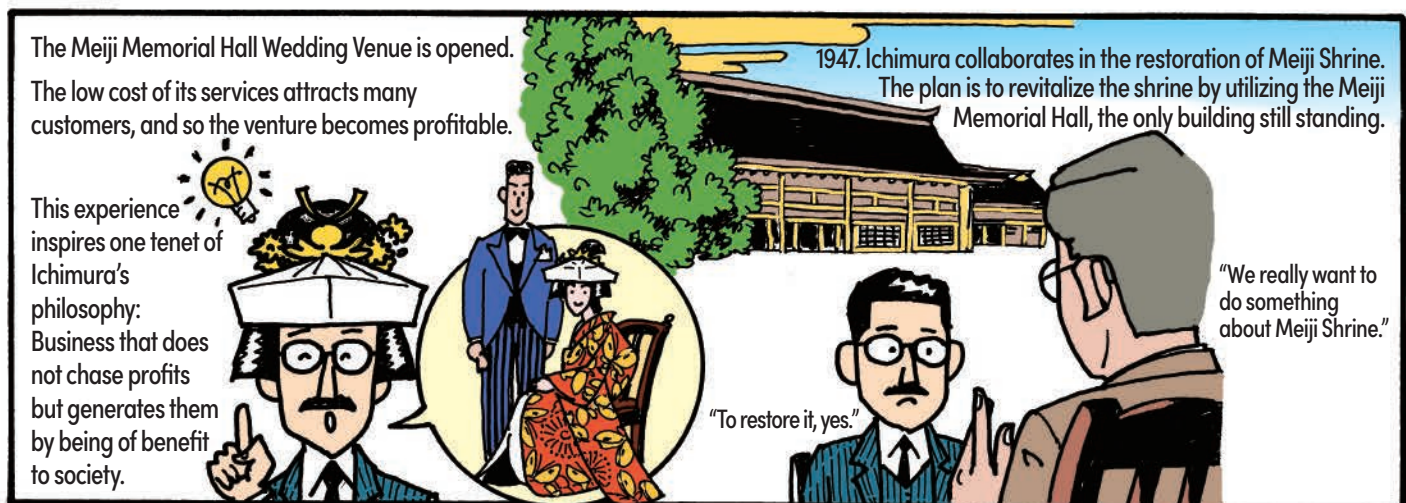
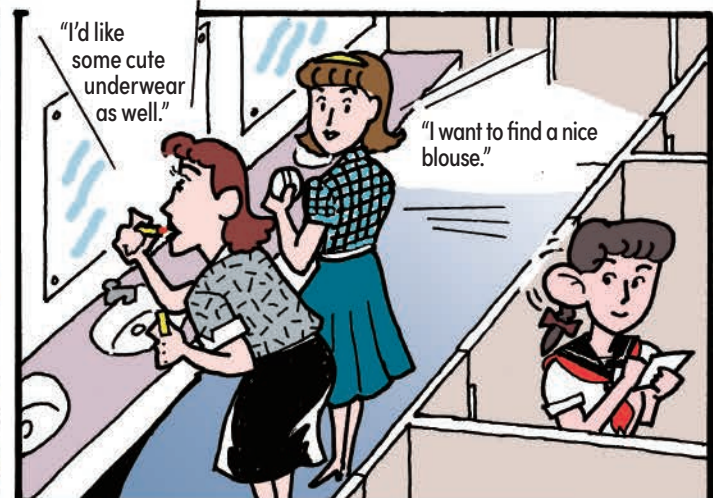
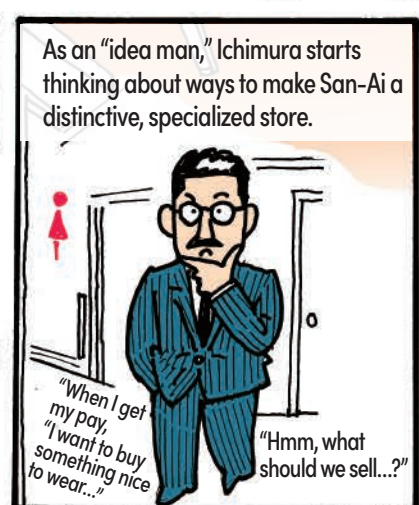
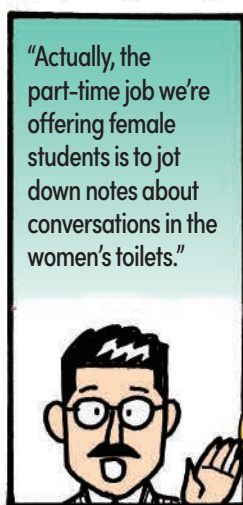
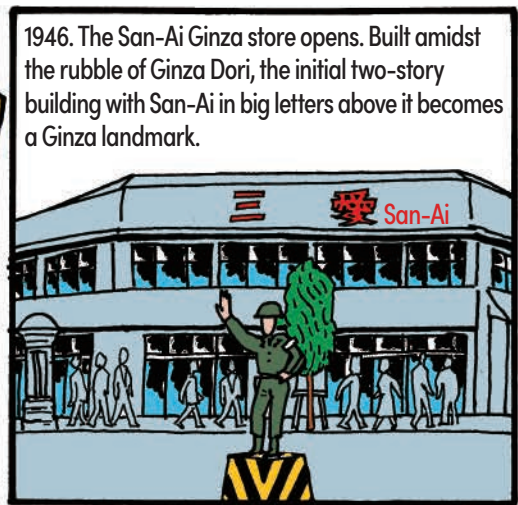




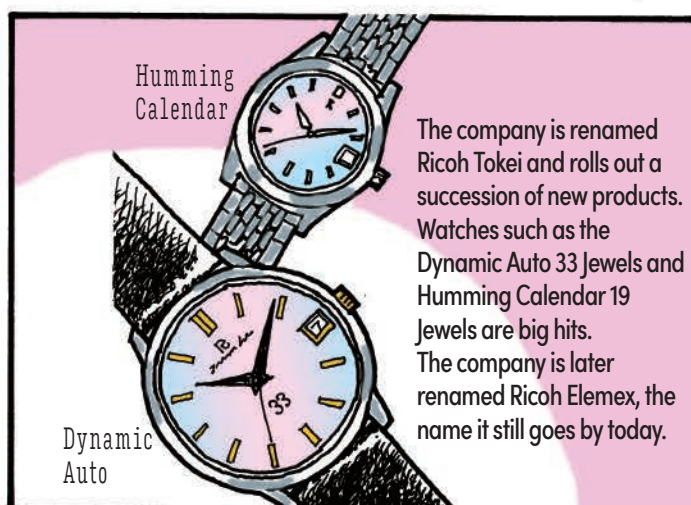
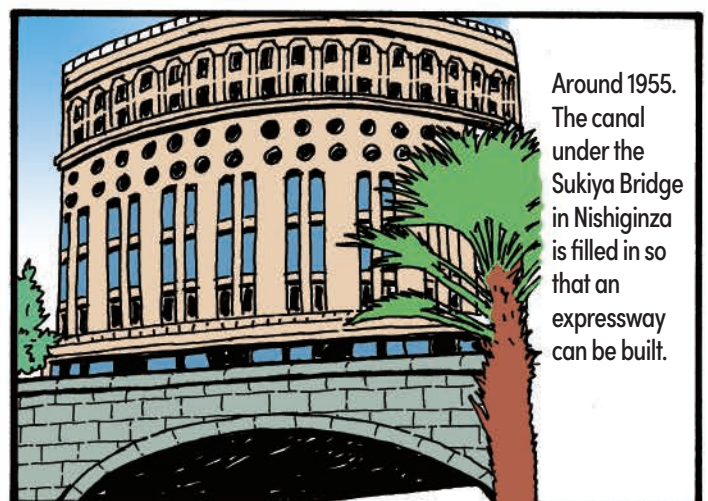
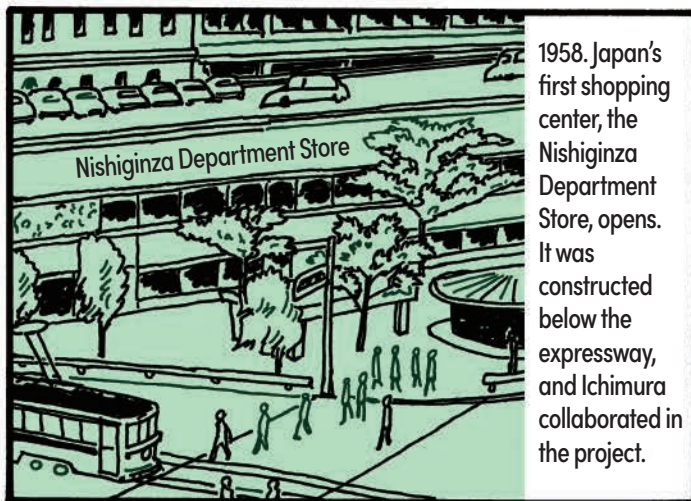
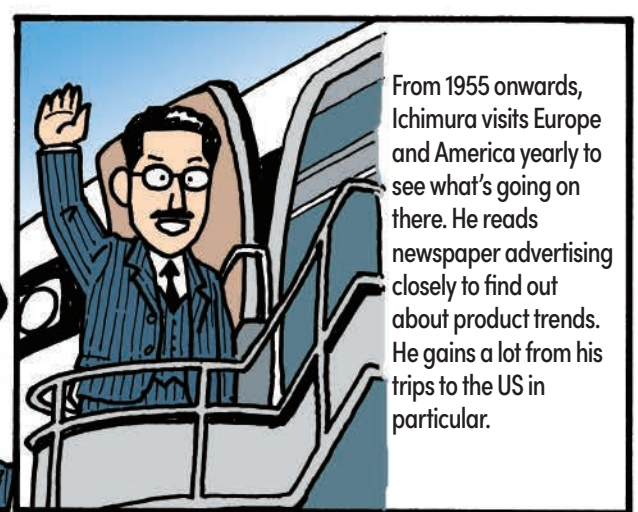
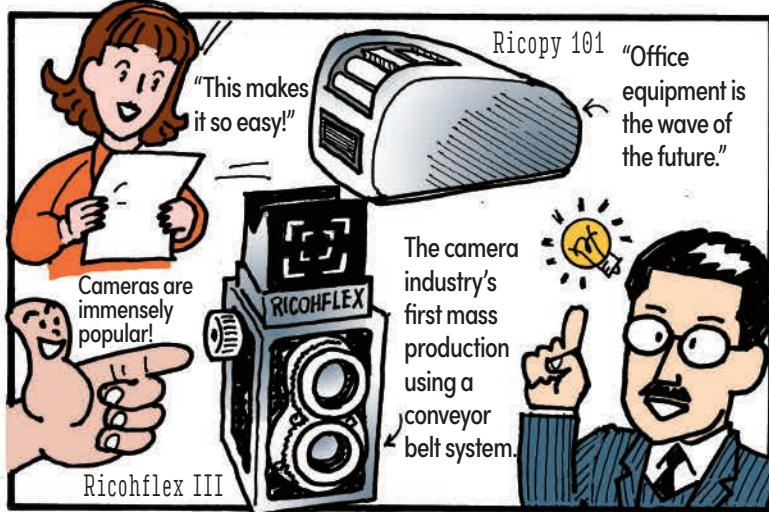
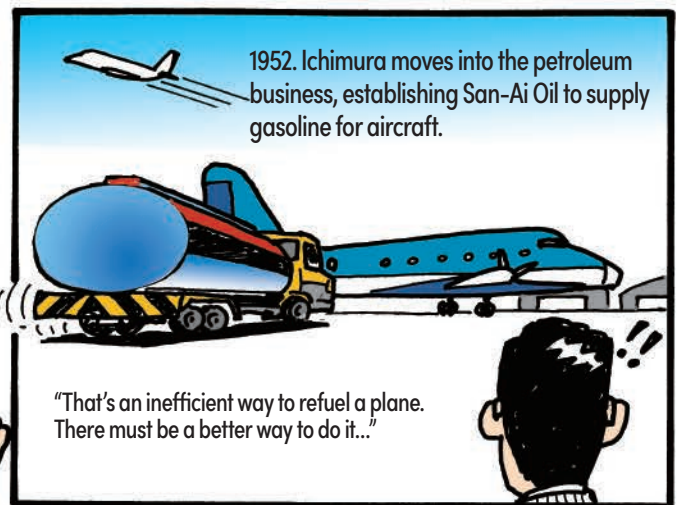
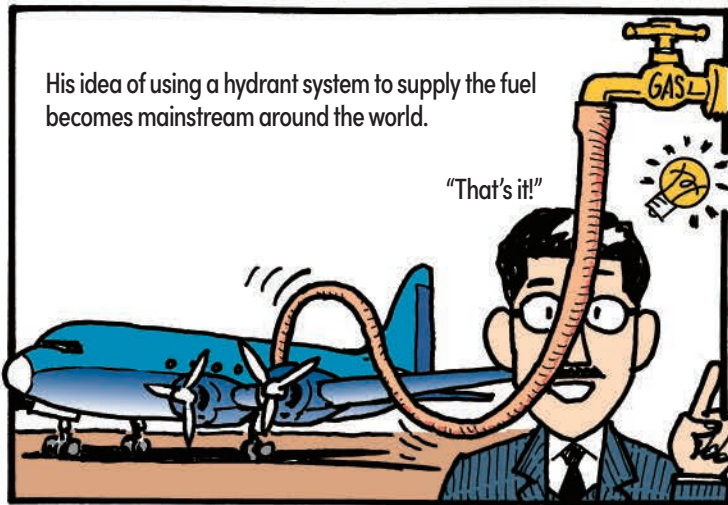
\*Spirit of Three Loves: "Love your neighbor, love your country, love your work"



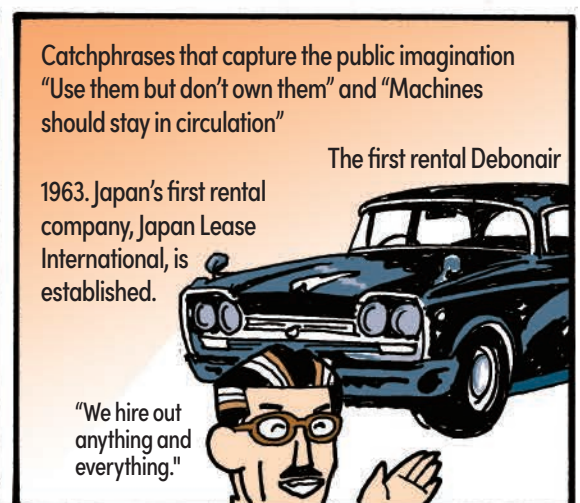
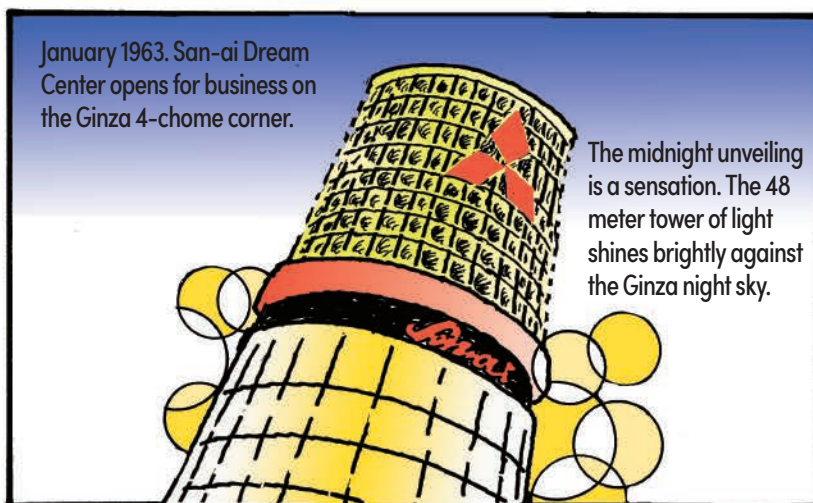
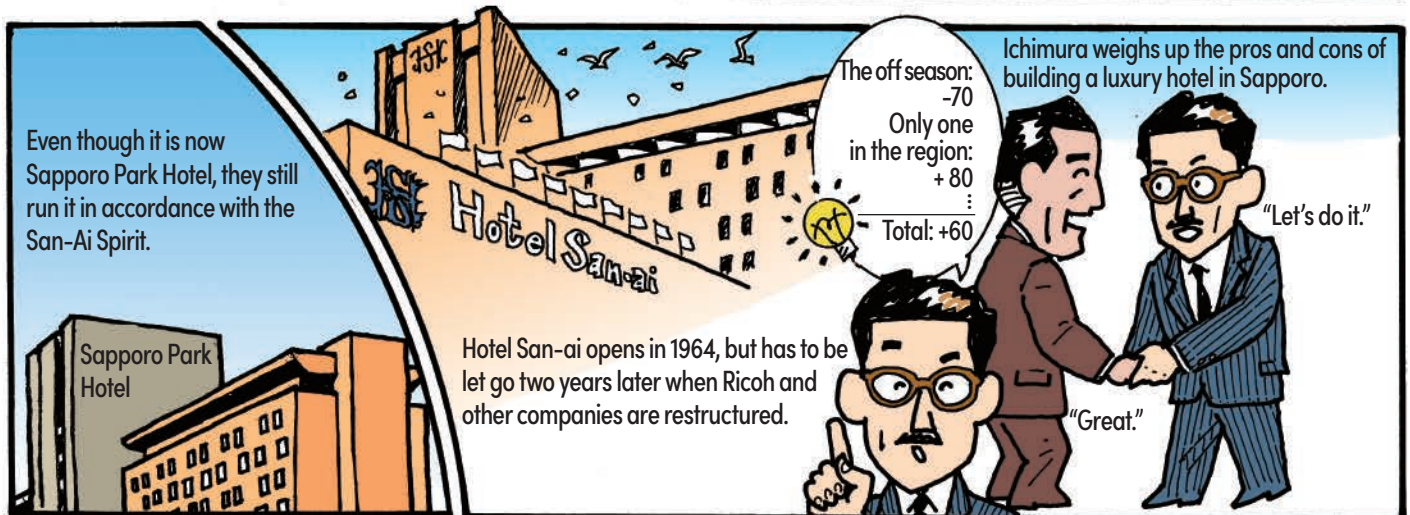




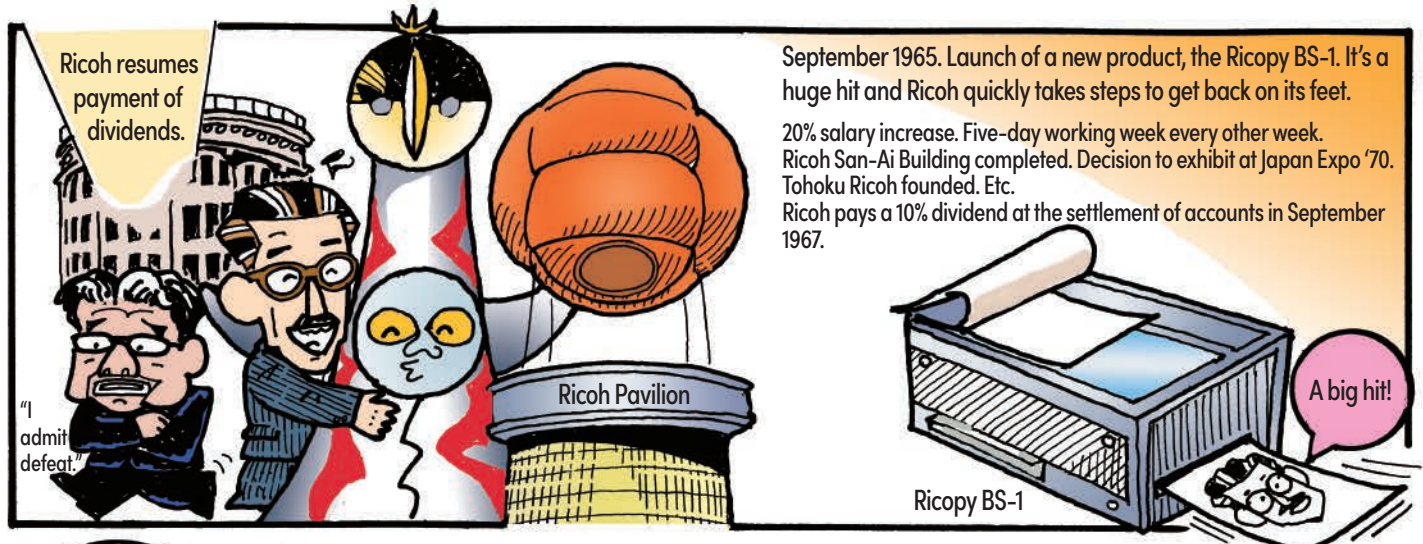












Ricoh resumes payment of dividends.

"I admit defeat."

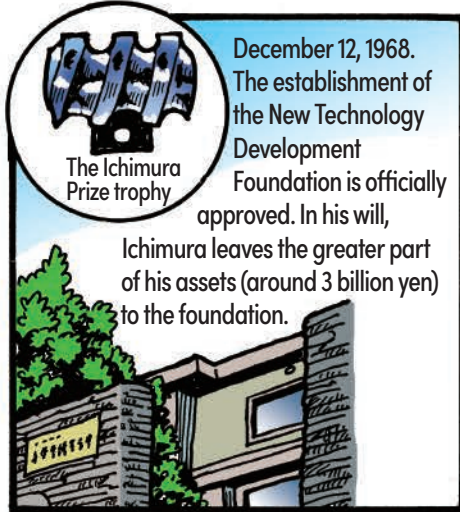
Ricoh Pavilion

Ricopy BS-1

A big hit!

September 1965. Launch of a new product, the Ricopy BS-1. It's a huge hit and Ricoh quickly takes steps to get back on its feet.

20% salary increase. Five-day working week every other week. Ricoh San-Ai Building completed. Decision to exhibit at Japan Expo '70. Tohoku Ricoh founded. Etc. Ricoh pays a 10% dividend at the settlement of accounts in September 1967.



The Ichimura Prize trophy

December 12, 1968. The establishment of the New Technology Development Foundation is officially approved. In his will,

Ichimura leaves the greater part of his assets (around 3 billion yen) to the foundation.

Ichimura is admitted to Keio Hospital on November 17, 1968. "Mrs. Ichimura, I'm afraid you should prepare yourself for the worst."

"Until yesterday, I was ill in bed. But, since I was the one who really wanted us to hold this event, I decided to join you here today. I wanted nothing more than to spend some time with you and your families."



Ichimura attends the Ricoh & San-Ai Sports Meet on November 5, 1968. This event is the last time that his employees see him in the flesh.

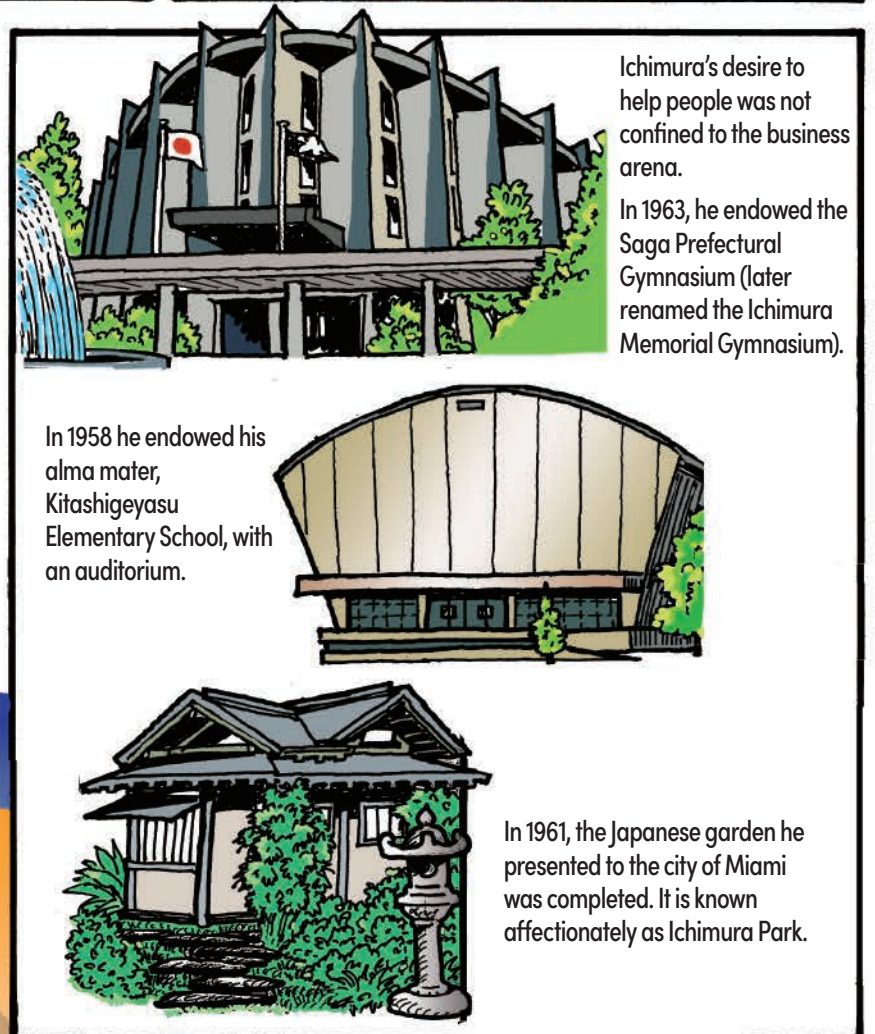
December 16, 1968. Kiyoshi Ichimura passes away at the age of 68.

His entire life was permeated by the San-Ai Spirit:

"Love your neighbor, love your country, love your work."



The End



Ichimura's desire to help people was not confined to the business arena.

In 1963, he endowed the Saga Prefectural Gymnasium (later renamed the Ichimura Memorial Gymnasium).

In 1958 he endowed his alma mater, Kitashigeyasu Elementary School, with an auditorium.

In 1961, the Japanese garden he presented to the city of Miami was completed. It is known affectionately as Ichimura Park.