

# PERSON OF THE YEAR

THE ARCHITECTS OF AI

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## JAPAN'S ALL-STARS

### FROM SHIFTS IN LEADERSHIP AND CURRENCY TURBULENCE

to new semiconductor plants, tariffs and a world expo, 2025 proved to be an eventful year for Japan's economic landscape. Behind the headlines, however, businesses across the country continued to do what they do best: driving innovation, advancing research and developing cutting-edge products across a wide range of fields. AI-enabled logistics hubs and breakthroughs in remote medical care are solutions to many of Japan's latest urgent domestic needs, most notably an aging population, as well as competition from rapidly advancing neighbors. Growth in R&D spending, investment and domestic demand reflects a team effort across the board, ensuring that Japan's presence as the fourth-largest economy is maintained. Here, we share some of the all-stars that have shaped the reputation of Japanese business this year.

### Toshiro Suzuki, representative director & CEO of Sanshin Electronics

*Chips provider, supplying some of Japan's largest electronics manufacturers.* "Just selling products is not enough now as a trading company; we need to be able to integrate various products together to form an entire solution. This is an area that both clients and manufacturers are looking for at the moment."

### Hideaki Nishioka, president of Lonseal Corporation

*Leading materials producer, with wide-ranging use cases from construction to emergency vehicles.* "We will pursue business expansion by exploring biomass materials for new sheet applications and developing environmentally conscious products using biodegradable materials."

### Masashi Kimura, president of Tokyo Measuring Instruments Laboratory

*Manufacturer of sensors and data-capturing solutions, handling the world's most demanding applications.* "Monitoring technology is currently a growing area. Overseas, we have seen strong demand from the shipbuilding and engineering industries—these areas will be growth drivers for our business."

## INSPIRED EDUCATION

### Professor Hiroshige Inazumi President of Aoyama Gakuin University

*Founded in 1874 by Christian missionaries, AGU has offered a rich education in literature, law and the sciences for more than 150 years.* "Many of our students begin their education with us at a very young age, so they aren't bound by some of the constraints of the typical Japanese education system, such as the pressure of university entrance exams. This gives them greater freedom to explore their interests."

### Masataro Doi, president of CBC

*Century-old trading firm specializing in chemicals, electronics and pharmaceuticals.* "CBC has been globally focused from a very early stage. We aim to accelerate our pioneering spirit as a trading company by leveraging our remarkable decision-making speed and global business agility."

### Ariki Inoue, president of Laplace

*Manufacturing support company providing tooling services to factories across Japan.* "We maintain direct channels with manufacturers and purchase directly from them, using these sales routes to deliver products efficiently to our clients, eliminating risks of counterfeit or defective items."

### Kazuya Ikemura, president of S&B Foods

*Producer of curry, spices and seasonings, known for creating the country's first domestic curry powder.* "Japanese people are very open-minded when it comes to trying new ingredients. I believe that is one of the key reasons why we've successfully adapted so many dishes from around the world."



**Iichiro Haga**  
President  
Toyo Corporation

*Leading trading house with the ability to deliver a wide variety of tools and machinery from around the world.* "Our strength lies in our stamina to apply our business model to a diverse range of clients worldwide."



**Akihiko Sakurai**  
President  
Seika Corporation

*Comprehensive trading firm, with offerings spanning electronics, energy and more.* "Ensuring stable power for the future is indispensable to maintaining innovation. It is essential to society and represents one of our most important responsibilities."



**Masaki Hilaga**  
President  
Morphe

*Tokyo-based tech firm working on image processing for autonomous vehicles and other key sectors.* "We are committed to contributing to this transition, helping bridge the gap from development to mass production."



**Eddie Kato**  
President  
Astroscale Japan

*Space pioneer providing on-orbit services, including debris removal and satellite refueling.* "We are the only company in Japan with Rendezvous, Proximity Operation & Docking (RPD) technology, holding 100% market share."