

***Founder-Owner's Message***

Today, we live in times when new ideas are being generated and disseminated rapidly. Many have rightly described the world is undergoing a knowledge revolution. Wealth creation in today's global economy is shifting from a resource-based to a knowledge-based one. Governments, industries and academia are emphasizing the development of a strong intellectual property regime to promote innovation and wealth for mankind. Intellectual property rights (IPRs) have become the flesh and blood of the new world economy. As IP counselors, we are the humble stewards of this knowledge revolution as we protect and harvest the fruit of companies' IPR strategy in the global marketplace by obtaining broad and strong IP rights, enforcing them in courts and securing meaningful and fair remedies when infringement occurs.

In 6 years, between 1992 to 1998, 50% of the top twenty Fortune 500 companies (ranked in terms of market capitalization) have changed. All 10 new entrants in the top 20 list are involved in highly intensive knowledge-based businesses. In a knowledge-based economy, obtaining broad and strong IPRs is paramount because patents, trademarks and copyrights protect the corporate assets that give value to these hi-tech companies.

This knowledge revolution opens up whole new worlds of opportunities for growth and prosperity. These new opportunities raise a challenge: how do international businesses effectively exploit the opportunities, and not allow them to become missed opportunities. It is the work of capable and competent IP lawyers to take advantage of the laws of the land to fully realize and exploit these opportunities.

When I left Washington, D.C., in 1979, I foresaw and was motivated by the importance of IPRs in the fledgling global economy. I was encouraged to realize my ambitions to build an IP law practice that will reflect and emphasize the importance of IPRs in the world economy.

There are many preconceptions that Japanese companies take a long time in decision-making and are slow to adapt to a changing marketplace thereby endangering their competitiveness leading to their collapse. Speed in securing and exploiting the opportunity is fundamental for success. I have always provided rapid responsiveness to clients' queries and needs. Also Japanese companies' past IPR strategy was merely grounded in quantity of patents, not quality. I was determined to ensure that the quality and value of my clients' patent should be more than a mere paper patent. These three characteristics - *speed and quality for our clients* - are the driving forces that nourished and have sustained my practice for 20 years. These unifying virtues will guide it through into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well.

I am delighted to celebrate my office's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with you. In 1995, we launched *I.P. Japan* - our office's newsletter about interesting updates and developments in Japanese IP law. This commemorative publication, *20/20 for the 21st Century*, is a special office anniversary edition of *I.P. Japan* and I hope that you will enjoy it. This commemorative publication *20/20 for the 21st Century* aims to provide vision and insight into the pressing international IP issues as mankind enters the new millennium.

The 21 papers of *20/20* are in honor of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Twenty years is also a "platinum" anniversary. The papers represent dynamic and cognitive views of well-regarded IP practitioners. I would like to thank the authors for their important time and effort in helping make *20/20* an important signpost of international IP law.

I am very grateful to Professor Donald S. Chisum for agreeing to write the Prologue to *20/20*. We are honored to have one of the world's leading thinkers of patent law share his thoughts about what the upcoming millennium has in store for patent law.

As everyone in this IPR business knows that IP law is an evolutionary creature and there is always room for development. Statutes and laws are always changing and have room for improvement. However, if we only open an argument between the past and the present, we will find that we have lost the future. *20/20 for the 21st Century* will provide the vision and reconcile the past, present and the future of IPRs in the coming 21<sup>st</sup> century. Having foresight will strongly and effectively protect a client's IPRs. However, the path toward this goal is inherently filled with big challenges. When my clients are confronted with these difficulties in Japan, I always reassure them with the words of Hannibal, as he was about to cross the Alps, "*We will Either Find a Way or Make One.*"

We constantly have Hannibal's inspiring words in mind when helping the clients realize their IP strategy in Japan and the world. I am proud of my team, comprising of capable and competent Japanese patent attorneys, versatile and knowledgeable foreign attorneys, highly qualified patent technology specialists, paralegals, secretaries and support staff. We are confident in providing the vision and strategy to clients. We are sure that we will find the way or make one for our clients in the bold new world of IP well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I hope that you will enjoy reading *20/20 for the 21st Century*.

**SHUSAKU YAMAMOTO**  
**SHUSAKU YAMAMOTO PATENT LAW OFFICES**