

Chapter 5 – Caption Translations (Kato Japan N Gauge 50th Anniversary Book)

Fig.5-1: The interview became lively and exceeded the scheduled period of one hour and half. The interviewer was Noriyuki Natori, the editor-in-chief at that time of “Rail Magazine” by Neko Publishing in Japan.

Fig.5-2: The hall provided a rare and important opportunity and was full of enthusiasts who listened to previously untold stories from the early days of Japanese N-gauge models.

Fig.5-3: Early products by Sekisui Kinzoku. RM Models, No.241, Sep., 2015.

Fig.5-4: An advertisement for a pivot bearing by “Kato Kinzoku” (Kato Metalworking Factory) in “Tetsudou Mokei Shumi” (TMS, Hobby of Model Railroading published in Japan), No.24, Sep., 1950. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

Fig.5-5: The release of various trucks for U.S. prototypes by Kato Kinzoku. TMS, No.44, May, 1952. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

Fig.5-6: A lifetime membership certificate to the NMRA for Yuji Kato issued in 1963, quite an early admission for someone from Japan.

Fig.5-7: Two hundred samples of a “SONY Microtrain” ready-to-run set were delivered to dealers but never made it to the market. RM Models, No.241, Sep., 2015.

Fig.5-8: The reailer from the “SONY Microtrain” set (right) would eventually be utilized by Sekisui Kinzoku as its first reailer for “9mm-gauge” (left).

Fig.5-9: An advertisement by Sekisui Kinzoku emphasizing the development of the first true-to-scale “9mm-gauge” models in the world. TMS, No.200, Feb., 1965. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

Fig.5-10: Progress in the development of “9mm-gauge” observed in the advertisements of TMS.

(a) The advertisement informing the actual size of “9mm-gauge” model which was not familiar to Japanese people at that time. TMS, No.203, May, 1965. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

(b) An early track with light brown sleepers. TMS, No.204, June, 1965. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

(c) Announcement of a release date of October, 1965 for JNR C50, the first “9mm-gauge” model in Japan. TMS, No.208, Oct., 1965. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

Fig.5-11: The release of Series 103 commuter electric cars in three different colors of orange-vermillion, “Uguisu” (light green) and canary (light yellow). The exclusion of blue was owing to the delay of KUMOHA103 available in blue color only. TMS, No.211, Jan., 1966. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

Fig.5-12: The preliminary announcement for the release of JNR EF70 alternative-current electric locomotive and Series 20 sleeper cars for limited-express “Asakaze” (morning breeze). TMS, No.225, Mar., 1967. (Cooperated by Kigei Publishing)

Fig.5-A1: This drawing, found recently, shows the result of an examination during the development of the first C50 about its feasibility to pass through the curve of 200mm in radius by using a universal joint between the engine and the shaft of the motor installed in the tender. Although Sekisui Kinzoku supplied early curved tracks of 270mm and 300mm in radius, the existing standards of Arnold track involving tracks with smaller radii could not be ignored because of the intention to export products to the U.S.A.

Fig.5-13: The interview celebrating KATO’s 50th anniversary of N-gauge models was held in Tokyo Big Sight inviting two guests, Masayuki Kunitake and Terumi Kunitake who each experienced the early days of N-gauge production as a staff member at Sekisui Kinzoku/ KATO. The chairman was Noriyuki Natori, the managing editor of Neko Publishing, the publisher of railroad and car magazines in Japan. The commentator was Haruhiko Ohta, the editor-in-chief of this book and the author of “The Nth Century BC” describing the history of N-scale in the world which had been published serially in “RM Models”. The projected picture was the Sekisui Kinzoku Engraving Factory when it had just been opened by Yuji Kato in 1957 (cf. Fig.4-10).

Fig.5-14: A young lady at work on a classic engraving machine.

Fig.5-15: A pantograph-type engraving machine – the primary means of manufacturing molds for N-gauge in those days.

Fig.5-16: Before the production of N-gauge trains, Sekisui Kinzoku had been an OEM supplier of metal parts produced mainly by drop forging to most of domestic manufacturers for HO-scale and O-scale ready-to-run models of the U.S. and Japanese prototypes.

Fig.5-17: Some drawings for early models were found recently. This hand drawing shows a front part of the smokebox for a JNR C50, Sekisui Kinzoku’s first model in 1965. The character “Q” written beside the number of drawing indicates “9mm-gauge” because the pronunciations of the English character “Q” and the number “9” are the same in Japanese.

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Fig.5-18: Arnold “rapido 200” diesel locomotive V200 which was utilized as a useful starting reference design of a N-gauge model by Yuji Kato. The V200 has silver truck parts, however, it can be identified as a product from 1962 because of the lettering on the underframe. This old picture serves as evidence of the beginning investigation into the production of N-gauge by Yuji Kato in 1962-1963.

Fig.5-19: The first export model ALCO PA-1 on the original plate, referred to as a “master”, for engraving the mold.

Fig.5-20: The grooves of the master enlarged laterally by four times of those in the corresponded mold were carved in advance by hand. Convex lines on a curved surface of a roof were engraved in the mold by tightly pressing the top of the machine spindle to the convex surface by the aid of a spring.

Fig.5-21: To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Sekisui Kinzoku/KATO N-gauge models, a short history of N-gauge production display utilizing past advertisements were displayed in a hall of Tokyo Big Sight where the annual Model Rail Contest, supported by Sekisui Kinzoku/KATO, was held in August, 2015. (Prepared by Yasuhiro Suzuki)

Fig.5-22: Early models by Sekisui Kinzoku and the masters needed for making molds were displayed in the hall of the 2015 Model Rail Contest. The pictures show some of the early models on display.