

Untoko-sho, dokkoi-sho : The Kaneka Way



Kimikazu Sugawara
Chairman and Representative Director

The Story of “*Ōkina Kabu*”

I have always loved children’s literature and often read picture books and fairy tales.

You might think this is a far-fetched story to start with, but I quoted “*Ōkina Kabu*” because I believe it’s a good example of analogical thinking that matches the Kaneka Way.

Among the many versions, the picture book retold by A. Tolstoy, illustrated by Churyo Sato, and translated by Risako Uchida is truly captivating. Fairy tales always nurture a sensitivity that helps us never lose hope and maintain a pure heart.



“*Ōkina Kabu*”
Retold by A. Tolstoy, translated by Risako Uchida, illustrated by Churyo Sato (Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers)
The passage included in the body text is a brief, explanatory retelling of the Japanese story “*Ōkina Kabu*,” known in English as “*The Gigantic Turnip*.”

“*Ōkina Kabu*” is hinted a kind of power of “Humanity.”

A turnip that an old man had planted grew into an extraordinarily large one—plump, lively, and even sweet.

The old man tried to pull it out of the ground, calling out, “Untoko-sho, dokkoi-sho, (*)” but it would not come loose.

So he asked the old woman to help, and the two of them pulled together, yet they could not pull it up.

Next, she called their grandchild. The grandchild called the dog, and the dog called the cat. They all pulled with all their might, yet they could not pull it up.

At last, the cat went to fetch a mouse...

“Untoko-sho, dokkoi-sho,” when everyone worked together, they finally pulled the turnip out.

In some folk versions, the story ends with everyone happily sharing a meal made from the turnip they pulled up together.

* A traditional Japanese call used to synchronize effort—like saying “heave-ho” as everyone pulls together.

Trust and Bonds

Business, like “*Ōkina Kabu*,” is not a solo journey but a team effort. All colleagues work wholeheartedly, sweat together, and joyfully share the harvest with gratitude and prayer. This reflects a traditional Japanese way of life. “Trust People & Mutual Respect.” As trust and bonds resonated, they turned into water, flowed into rivers, and gave rise to fertile land. That is, in the Kaneka Way, “Work” is regarded as an “anthem to humanity” that grows through Kokorozashi(*1) and colleagues. In this sense, the fairy tale “*Ōkina Kabu*” can almost be read as a stylized version of Kaneka’s business model.

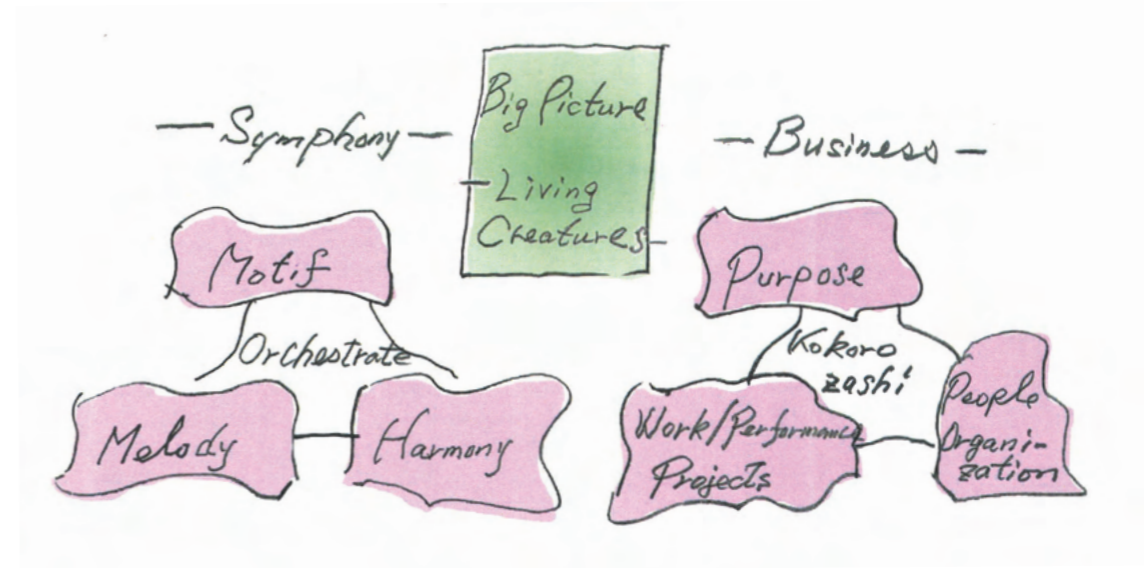
*1 An unwavering resolve toward higher ideals

Another Stylized Perspective of the Kaneka Way

One morning upon waking, a whisper crossed my mind like a voice from heaven. It was the moment a different analogy was born. Is this a kind of “*I Wake Up Every Morning to Dream*” (Haruki Murakami)(*2) phenomenon? The story unfolds as follows. The idea was to compose Kaneka Way’s symbol, “Initiative 26” (what is known as a mid-term plan), as a symphony. In short, I recognized the structural similarities between business and music and explored the playful mental exercise by editing the Kaneka Way as a symphony. I was intrigued!

*2 Haruki Murakami, “*I Wake Up Every Morning to Dream: Haruki Murakami Interview Collection 1997-2011*,” Bungeishunju (Bunshu Bunko), 2012

Structural Relationship Between Symphony and Business



The symphony’s motif represents the purpose and philosophy of “Initiative 26”; the melody represents how we advance our work and our mindset; the harmony represents the state of mind of people and organizations; and Kokorozashi is the leadership that orchestrates them. Business as a symphony layers multiple sounds that resonate in the hearts of colleagues and generate performance as if it were alive. I wanted to visualize this concept as a “triangular model.”



The Prologue of “Initiative 26”

The prologue, structured through this conceptual framework, has been organized according to the table of contents that follows. I have tried to arrange the goals and Kokorozashi that “Initiative 26” aims for in a symphony-like way.

Motif	Change! Journey of Hope		
Melody	Kaneka Way —First Movement— Reflect on the Whole	Kaneka Way —Second Movement— The World Is Eagerly Awaiting You	Kaneka Way —Third Movement— Narrative for Dramatic Change
Harmony	Kaneka Spirit —Final Movement— Human Driven		

Putting Culture Front and Center in Management

The prologue of “Initiative 26” that follows represents Kaneka’s view of its culture—the Kaneka Way. Management places this sensibility at the center of its activities. Now, let us begin. People grow through “Kokorozashi and colleagues.” We want to do meaningful “Work” that truly serves society.

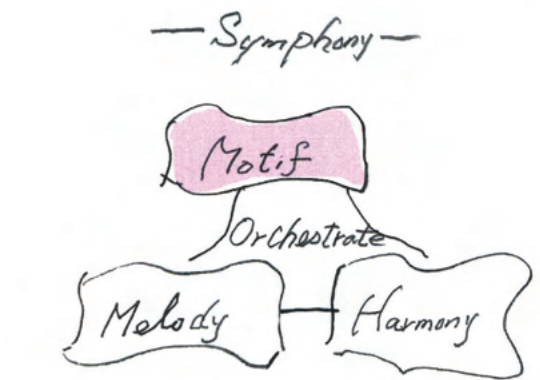


—If I wasn't hard, I wouldn't be alive.
If I couldn't ever be gentle, I wouldn't deserve to be alive—
Detective Philip Marlowe

Motif

Change! Journey of Hope

We must never stay in the same place, even for a moment



—Spread your wings of free courage and curiosity, and leap—
Think globally, 24/7, 360-degree view, spanning the earth

I. Change! Yes, You Can

I took a detour into the world of Greek mythology. I thought, “If I take a different path than usual, maybe I’ll discover something new.” Thunder struck. Then a voice from the above spoke: “Hope is trapped in Pandora’s Box. The ‘Initiative 26’ is an attempt to free ‘Hope’ from Pandora’s Box.” In response to that voice, I named “Initiative 26” as “Change! Journey of Hope.” In Greek mythology, the “Hero’s Journey” is a recurring theme—overcoming hardships and becoming a new self. “Survive” is defense against threats; “Thrive” is the departure toward hope. From “Survive” to “Thrive.” All right, let’s go for it.



II. Pandora's Box

That's the story.

Pandora was the first woman created by Zeus, the all-powerful god.

He gave her a box—later known as Pandora's Box.

Inside were all the calamities of humanity:

disease, conflict, and more.

Pandora, out of curiosity,

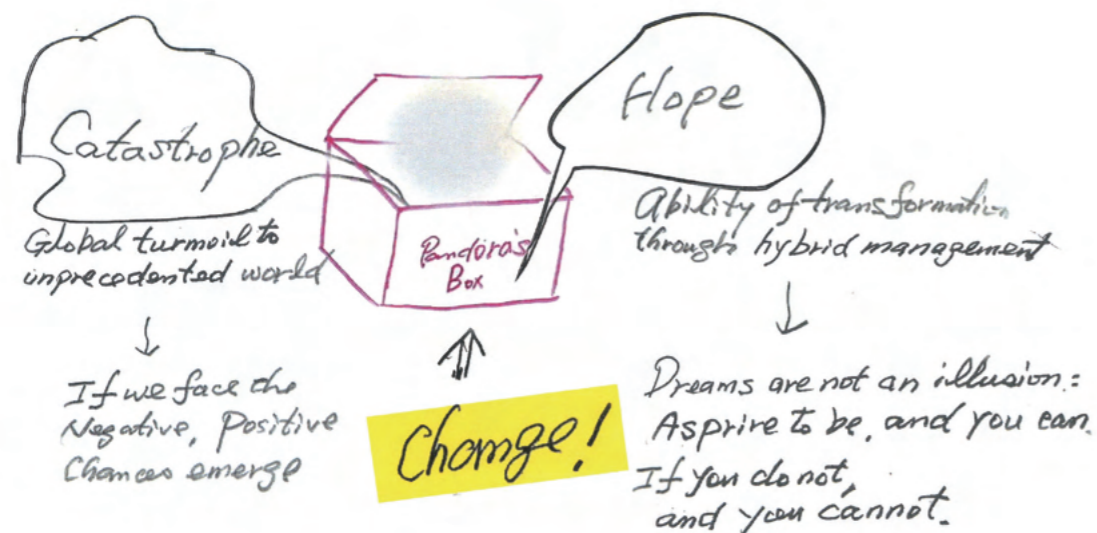
broke her promise and opened the forbidden box.

Calamities flew out,

spreading misfortune across the world.

Panicking, Pandora closed the lid,

leaving only "Hope" at the bottom of the box.



III. It's Okay—Those Feelings Will Surely Be Conveyed

Chaos and Anarchy are spreading in the 21st century.

The flames of war are spreading as well.

Now is the time to release "Hope" from Pandora's Box.

I have to create a place for "Hope."

I started on the prologue to "Initiative 26."

Kokorozashi lies in what Raymond Chandler spoke of: "If I wasn't hard,

I wouldn't be alive. If I couldn't ever be gentle,

I wouldn't deserve to be alive."

Welcome to the Narrative of Hope.

IV. Change and Discover the Future

We are living in a time of change.

Our everyday "Work" is change.

We are managing our portfolio with an emphasis on the following 3Ps.

- Purpose (soulful commitment)
- Practice (serious engagement)
- Publish (outward communication)

V. The New Frontier Created by Chemistry

Chemistry plays a vital role.

It is a driving force behind national growth.

It shines across every corner of society.

It makes a real difference.

Chemical innovation has the power to solve social challenges and open up uncharted markets.

Kaneka studies "life" through chemistry.

By exploring the mysteries of life on Earth, we aim to nurture life and support society.

Opportunities for discontinuous growth lie ahead.

We will continue to deepen our pursuit of "Life focus management" and the "chemistry of life."

We are shifting our management resources to life sciences.

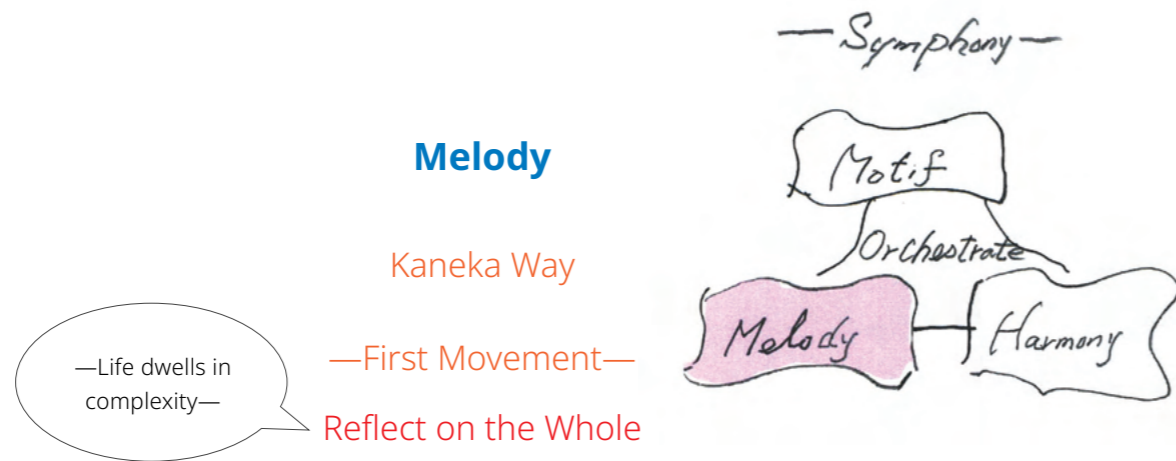
- Kaneka biodegradable polymer Green Planet™
- Genome editing technology, biopharmaceuticals, regenerative and cell medicine
- Organic dairy products business, supplements, and fermentation culture process technology

Kaneka's "biomanufacturing," PV technology, and medical devices are all connected to the big "life," that is, life on Earth.

The words of Martin Rees— "Before we are no longer able to live on the Earth"—strike a deep chord.

We will continue to take on challenges.





I. See the Whole, Not Just Analysis

Business is a living organism.
 If you break down and analyze complex business challenges into isolated factors without an entire view, you lose the holistic intelligence of the business.
 It's like dissecting a live fish.
 Loss of life; the living essence is destroyed.
 Business has a formula for victory:
 Connecting the parts and perceiving the whole.

II. The Birth of the Intuitive Idea Craftsperson

No—it's not just that.
 As complexity grows, the systems acquire will of their own.
 It begins to assert itself on its own and can no longer be managed or controlled.
 The Kaneka Way exists to inspire and ferment your colleagues, organizing a group of idea craftsperson who act on intuition, inspiration, and sixth sense.
 It means to refuse to view business—complexity itself—solely in terms of technology or how-tos.

III. The Key Is Kokorozashi

Let me repeat myself.
 The reason we may not be able to solve the issues hidden within "complexity"—businesses, markets, and social systems—is that, without a holistic view, we keep breaking the "giant machine" down into smaller parts.



The whole is not simply the sum of its parts.
 So this is where the Kaneka Way begins through "Kokorozashi":
 I am determined! I am engaged!
 No matter how good the idea, if you don't think about the whole with strong "Kokorozashi," nothing can be solved.
 Don't overthink—just act.
 Start quickly, proceed, and continue.

IV. Sensitivity Is Lacking. That's No Good

See, feel, notice, and put your thoughts into it.
 Watch carefully the city and the site.
 Don't miss observation and insight.
 If you only look at dots or parts, you'll lose focus or miss the mark.
 You can't even form a hypothesis or lead people.
 What they care about is not being told "that's good," but making people say,
 "I like it, I want to buy it, I want to use it."
 Focus on that.
 An idea craftsperson doesn't look for reasons to act.
 If it doesn't work, they move on to the next step immediately.



V. Make a Guess

Rather, how about thinking like this?
 A plan is about finding the fabulous "what ifs."
 Like a fisher worker or a hunter, make a guess.
 Good planning is about encountering favorable coincidences.
 Fortune comes wearing the mask of misfortune.
 Today's misfortune will turn into tomorrow's serendipity.
 You are the one who moves mountains.

VI. Approach the Core from Small Fragments

If you want to change results, review your habits.

24/7, 360-degree view.

Set up antennas. To find meaningful information in the vast sea of data, this is how every day begins.

There are three mindsets:

1. Even if the information is just small fragments or limited, see through to the core. Make this perspective a habit.
Sensitivity can be refined through conscious habituation
2. And resilience.
Even when caught off guard, anticipate and keep moving forward. Enterprises must not stand still
3. Always be aware of priority, dynamism, speed, and scale

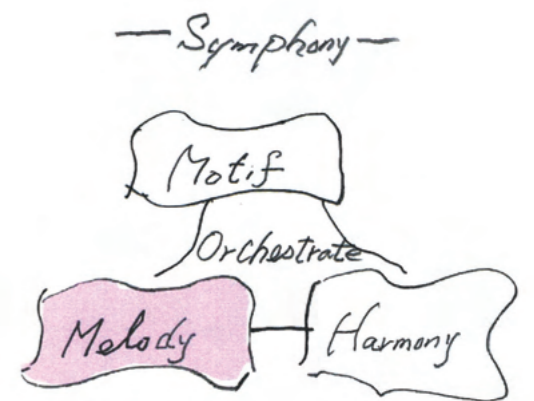


Learn from Zico

Zico was a god of management.

(Belief) Only by fulfilling our responsibilities can we become a true “familia.”

1. A group of friends is not “familia.”
There must be distance between coach and players.
The club is the foundation for both coach and players.
Without the club, there are neither coach nor players
2. Do simple, small things properly. Strive to win, be desperate.
Showing that to supporters and stakeholders is what makes a professional.
Winning creates unity and cohesion. Winning grows the club
3. Zico Spirit
Devotion: play selflessly for the team
Sincerity: listen openly
Respect: respect everyone: opposing team, teammates, coaches, and supporters



Melody

Kaneka Way

—Second Movement—

The World Is Eagerly Awaiting You

I. Live Impermanence

—Voice from the above—

“What are you hesitating for? Enterprises must adapt to new environments without delay.

If you just stand still and do nothing, you’ll become a fossil or a zombie.

Dinosaurs probably disappeared like this.”

All things in the universe never stay the same for even a moment.

Impermanence—nothing lasts forever.

Impermanence is a teaching to live through change.

You have with strong “Kokorozashi to Win”

You gather those with same “Kokorozashi,” and live impermanence.

You realize the future.

II. To Live Is to Change

The speed of change is a roller coaster.

Innovation. Changing values.

Uncertainty. Discontinuity.

What was familiar, what was taken for granted, is disappearing.

For example, democracy, perhaps even freedom, equality, human rights, and even “human life” and “earth’s life” are at risk.

War, divided world, severance of bonds, energy and food crises.

Past winning formulas no longer work.

We are being tested: “Can we change?”



III. Focus on “Now”

No matter how much you resist, you can't undo the past.
The point is, the future is not determined by the accumulation of the past, but by accumulation of “now.”
Unlike the past, which cannot be redone, “now” can be changed.
The clock's hands always point to “now.”
Start the day.
Take a step forward.



IV. Say You'll Do It

A single word can change a person.
If there's something you want to do, first say “I'll do it.”
And if you say you'll do it, do it.
Dare to climb over the fence.
If you wish, you can do it.
If you don't wish, you can't.
Let go of one thing.
Gain one thing.
It's never too late to start what you wanted to do.

V. Can't Do It? Throw Away Such Self-Limitation!

Everything will work out somehow.
In any situation, tackle it as “Work,” not “Problem.”
That attitude brings solutions.
Work earnestly and do your best.
Even if things don't go as initially hoped, the situation will always improve.
Everything will work out.
You can't score if you don't shoot.



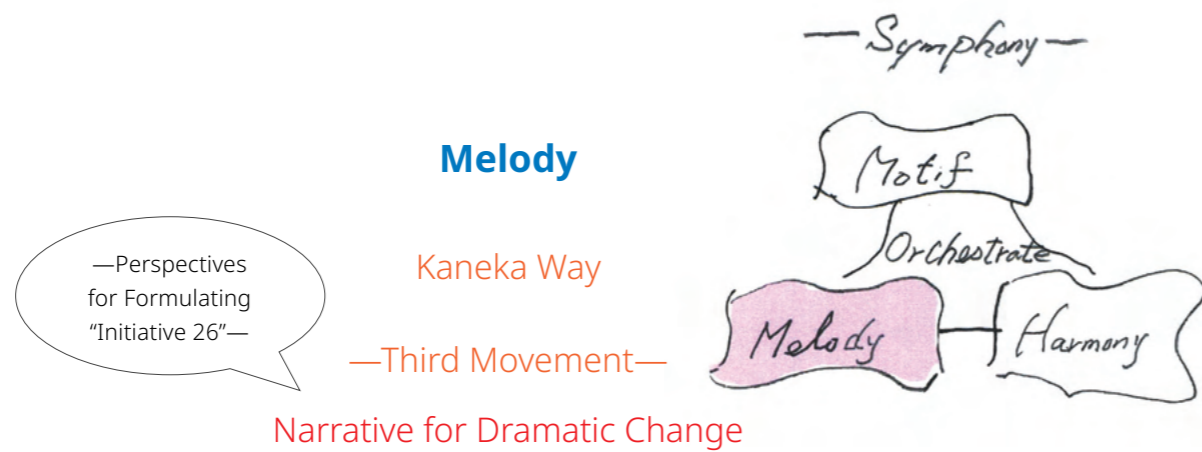
VI. Are You an Extra One Miler?

Is it outside the strike zone?
But that's within my range.
In an era of discontinuous change, even if it's different from your immediate interests, always keep your antenna up.
Don't be dragged only by immediate concerns.
Before you know it, you'll become a shallow, narrow person.
Even if it's outside your strike zone, don't miss the encounter.
Make sure to take detours.
In America, such mavericks are called Extra One Milers.
For the team, give your all on the verge of victory or defeat.
No hesitations to sacrifice yourself.
How many such members are on your team?
The outcome of the game is decided here.

VII. Raise Clarity with “Surfing” of Art

See, feel, notice—people with artistic sensibility will thrive from now on.
Not through technical theory or how-tos alone,
but by elevating issues into opportunities with intuitive “sixth sense”.
Make paradigm shift from “mountain climbing” to “surfing” in strategic thinking.
But also, about raising the clarity of the issue.
A blurry world is like shooting arrows in the fog.





I. Start from the Issue

A good plan is determined by the correct choice of issue.

If you get the entry wrong, you won't reach the right answer.

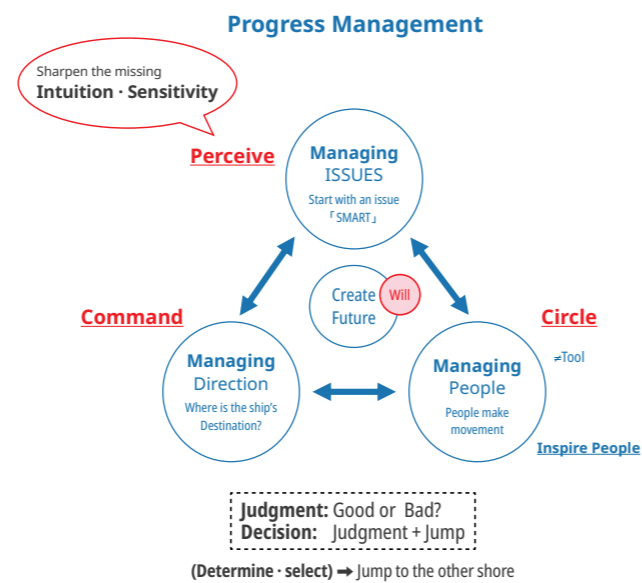
An issue—a good challenge—is:

1. A big challenge, meaning that solving it creates dynamic value
2. A challenge that brings returns when solved
3. Break down into small challenges and tackle the one with the greatest impact first

II. Progress Management

Visualize Progress Management (Transparency), which consists of following three Managements.

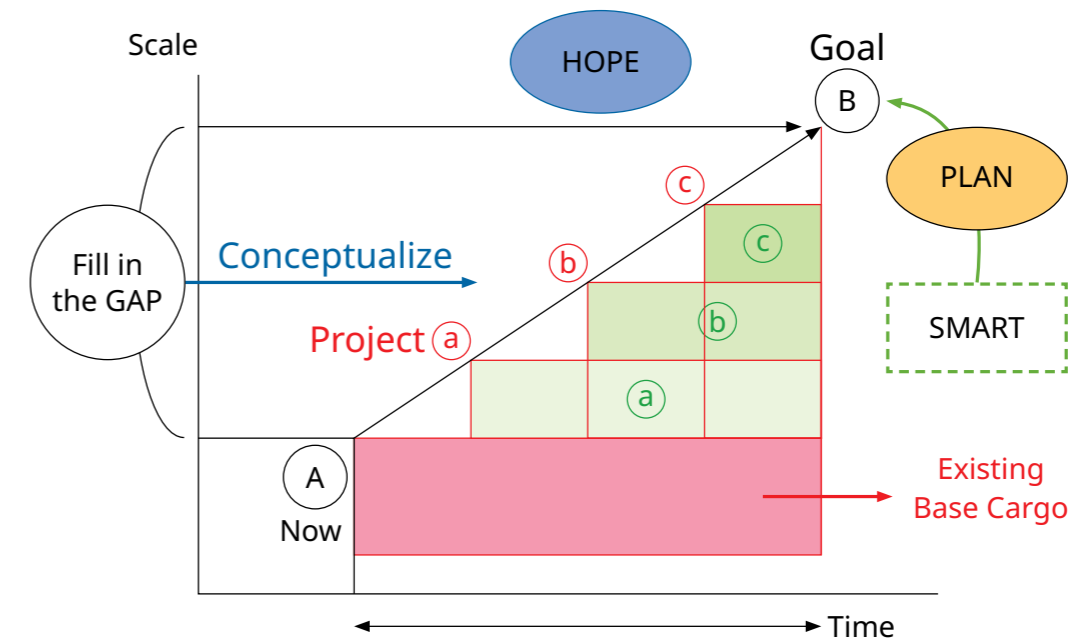
1. Managing Issues: Structure issues
2. Managing Direction: Prioritize issues, and propose a vision for speed and dynamism
3. Managing People: Inspire colleagues and move things



III. SMART Way

Turn business activities into projects.

1. Define the Goal (destination)
2. Define major themes by bundling individual challenges that fill the Gap into concepts
3. Structure the major themes and break them down into SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time-limited) projects
4. Decide the project deadline with its "Owner"



IV. Check Small Things!

A kingdom falls for want of a nail.
 For want of a nail, the shoe was lost.
 For want of a shoe, the horse was lost.
 For want of a horse, the rider was lost.
 For want of a rider, the battle was lost.
 For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost.
 And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

V. Belief

- 1. Do right Act fair and square. Your actions are seen
- 2. Transparency Make information transparent so that all colleagues can fulfill their roles, regardless of position or affiliation
- 3. Fairness Discard fixed ideas and preconceptions. All colleagues are equal

VI. Everything Is Because of Me

Questions for leaders.

Because of Me

Taking full responsibility for everything is never easy. However, if we keep that mindset as we move forward, we can grow as professionals and as human beings.

- Are you determined?
- Are you engaged?
- Are you committed?



I. “The Future” Is Already “Within You”

Let’s talk about the future.
 Look at a single tree. It bears many fruits, some of which eventually burst open and scatter as seeds. Others, carried by birds, take root far away and become great trees. Isn’t a person’s future just like this tree? Everything depends on what you do now. The clock’s hands always point to now. Rather than taking the flat road, dare to climb over the fence!

II. Discover Future 100 Years!

What a wonderful Kaneka family!
 What a wonderful world...
 This song is “What a Wonderful World,” sung by the father of jazz, Louis Armstrong, nicknamed Satchmo
 Like “We Are the World,” I love this song so much that I think of it as the Global Kaneka Song. It’s the anthem of Global Kaneka.
 So sometimes, I play with the words and say,



“What a wonderful family of Kaneka,” because I think Kaneka truly is.
I believe so from the bottom of my heart.
One day, that person will be gone.
One day, I will be gone, and so will my friends.
But that tree will not disappear.
Nor will the stones or soil beneath the tree.
You are here, and you will carry it forward.
An enterprise is a Never-Ending Story.
I know you, you know me.
The empathy of friends around the world resonates.

III. Read the Heart of Poetry

A good poem frees people's hearts.
When you say, “It's cold,” and someone replies, “It's cold” that warmth
—Machi Tawara, “*Salad Anniversary (*)*”
A small trigger can move a person's heart.
Machi Tawara has expressed this richness.
Hidden emotions come out as they are.
The Year 2026 begins.
Kaneka walks through the forest of “the poetic heart.”

* Machi Tawara, “*Salad Anniversary*” KAWADE SHOBO SHINSHA, 1987

Gratitude and Prayers

The god of management is in the details.
Each and every thing that happens in the field, each and every change in each
and every person in the field is management itself.
Management is about shining a light on the details and moving the whole thing forward.
I aim to stay close to the field and go back and forth between the whole
and the parts, anticipating the change in the times.

Nothing would make me happier than for you to read this report
and understand the realities of management on the ground.

Over the past year, we have also been engaged in “Human-Driven Management.”
I am reporting this with gratitude and prayers for all of you.

