

“Graduation from Le Mans”

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Since our first participation in Le Mans in 1979, thirty-one years have already passed. In the earliest days of Dome, Le Mans meant everything. We had frantic days, but it is true to say that our enthusiasm supported our company, developed our technologies and attracted customers.

We always faced financial limitations and I can't say that we were fully satisfied with our performance. However, looking at our performance from the viewpoint of a private individual who developed original racing cars at my own expense to challenge Le Mans, our achievement was certainly adequate. Above all, there is no doubt that our sixteen challenges against Le Mans formed the blood, the flesh and the bones of Dome as driving force.

Looking back on our experiences, all of them were joyful except for the financial difficulties. I would like to shout from the bottom of my heart, “Thank you, Le Mans!” But it is time for us to graduate from the race.

Primarily Dome is a constructor, not a racing team. Therefore, I have no particular obsession about participation in the race. Besides, I used to invest all my money in development of each racing car, and accordingly I usually didn't have money left for the race at the time when the car was completed.

That is why in most cases we participated in Le Mans by trusting our original racing car that we had developed at our own expense to a racing team in the form of a lease without charge or financial aid.

But as I wrote in my essay “Long Road Le Mans” in last May, almost all cases led to financial troubles, and we were forced to pay unexpected expenses, or sometimes we became a target of abuse. Every time we felt unpleasantness at the end.

In other words, Dome's challenges against Le Mans were always accompanied by unreasonable situations of “paying money only to be claimed against or defamed.” Since I participated in the race simply because I wanted to enjoy it, not because of any grand reason like an obligation or a mission, I really got sick of the predictable ending of every challenge, always “paying money only to be claimed against or defamed.”

Anyway, at my present age, any adventures that are inevitably accompanied by claims and mental abuse from others have decreased in their attractiveness or pulling force, however fascinating they might be. In addition, the indifference of the public toward our technological adventure of challenging Le Mans with original machines from Japan as many as sixteen times is one of the reasons for me to give up the race, even though I participated in this adventure for fun.

On the other hand, I feel it is easy to stop Dome's challenges to Le Mans, because it will influence almost nobody in any way. I wondered whether I even needed to announce that in the first place.

If I write as above, I will be criticized as sulking or having an inferiority complex. But the only driving force of my difficult challenge of participating in Le Mans with original machines as a private individual was nothing but a magma-like enthusiasm, and therefore, now that the driving force has cooled down, it is natural for me to stop.

At any rate, I am weary of the silly circumstance of "paying money only to be claimed against or defamed," and I am not at all interested in wasting money by investing almost all of the profit of our company in our challenge against Le Mans.

If an automobile manufacturer requests us to develop a Le Mans racing car in future, Dome will be happy to accept their request, and if Dome develops into a company large enough to pay all the expenses for participation in Le Mans, Dome may once more take up the challenge. But that will happen, if it eventuates, in the next generation, and I am sure that I will not be at the scene.

What shall I do from now? Naturally I will start playing with some other toys. Because I have already started preparing for that, I will announce my plans later. At present, I can only say that, since Dome started with the "Dome Zero," my career at Dome should end with a sports car. The project "*Isaku* (posthumous work)" will start now.

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