

Weaving a Future from Futaba

Asano Nenshi Overcoming Uncertainty and Committing to Walk with Futaba

Empowering Revitalization with Thread

Asano Nenshi Co., Ltd.'s Futaba Plant, known as the "Futaba Super Zero Mill," manufactures a patented special thread called "Super Zero." This innovative thread is the first in the world to successfully incorporate air into its structure. The Super Zero thread is processed into towels and other products in Imabari, Ehime Prefecture, and sold nationwide. In addition to manufacturing, the plant also operates a café and sells high-quality towels on-site. The company name "Nenshi" translates to "twisting thread," reflecting its core business.

Headquartered in Gifu Prefecture, the company expanded into Futaba Town after an invitation from the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry. At the time, the govern-



A model showcasing the exterior of the Futaba Plant.

ment was working to support the revitalization of areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake by attracting various companies to build factories. Among these initiatives, the focus fell on Asano Nenshi for its expertise in thread production.

When Asano Nenshi's president, Masami Asano, visited the area on a scouting trip, his decision to set up operations in Futaba Town was heavily influenced by the words of the town's mayor: "Futaba Town's recovery is the slowest—it's at the very bottom." The textile industry was increasingly shifting its production overseas, leading to a decline in domestic jobs. The situation of both the industry and the town resonated with President Asano, and he felt a strong desire to simultaneously promote the recovery of the textile industry and Futaba Town.

However, when the decision was made to expand into Futaba Town, very few people had returned to the area, and he felt a great deal of uncertainty, wondering, "Can we do business in a place with so few people? Will we even be able to find work-



The twisting machines in the factory at Asano Nenshi's Futaba Plant

ers?"

Despite these concerns, the Futaba Plant officially opened its doors on April 22, 2023. Today, the company has expanded significantly, securing product contracts not only in Japan but also with companies in Vietnam, China, and South Korea. Looking ahead, Asano Nenshi aims to increase visitors to Futaba Town, promote the town, and contribute to its revitalization.

Unparalleled Absorbency

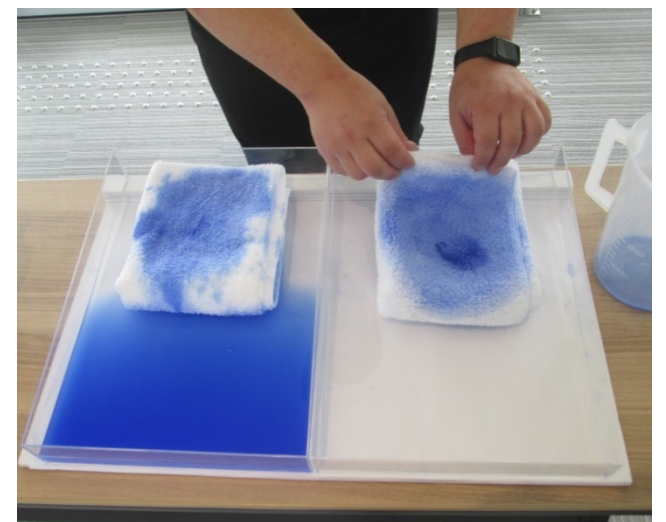
Patented Thread "Super Zero"

Asano Nenshi's Super Zero is made by twisting water-soluble threads, which dissolve in hot water, with cotton threads. When the water-soluble threads dissolve, air is trapped, giving the material a voluminous texture. Water-soluble threads are delicate and difficult to handle, making it challenging for companies other than Asano Nenshi to produce this thread.

Products made with Super Zero feature qualities such as quick-drying, softness, and wrinkle resistance. Among these, its absorbency is particularly remarkable. As shown in the photo, it absorbs 1.6 times more water than an ordinary towel.

There are other products made with Super Zero, including T-shirts, bathrobes, and pajamas. Additionally, there are towel products in collaboration with Futaba Town, called "Dakishimete Futaba," available in three colors: pink represents cherry blossoms, blue represents the sea, and green represents the color of the uniforms worn by Futaba High School students when they participated in the Koshien tournament. They come in various types, including handkerchiefs, face towels, bath towels, and towel mufflers.

The products are available not only at the in-house store within the facility but also at department stores, drugstores, and through TV shopping programs.



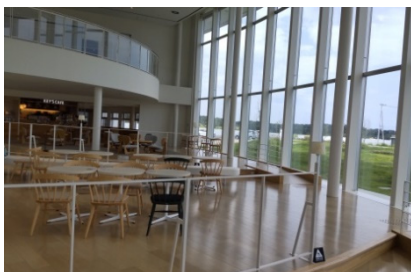
An experiment comparing the absorbency of towels. The towel on the right has absorbed all the water, while the ordinary towel on the left allowed water to seep through underneath.

A Café and In-House Store on Site

The Futaba Plant features not only a factory but also facilities a café and an in-house store, among others.

The café serves as a gathering place for local residents to relax. It offers dishes such as pasta made with shirasu (whitebait) and seasonal drinks and desserts made with peaches from Fukushima Prefecture.

At "Air Kaoru Futaba-Maru," the in-house store, towels and clothing made with



The café and lounge located inside the Futaba Plant.



"Air Kaoru Futaba-Maru," the in-house store.

the magical Super Zero thread, including the "Air Kaoru" line, are sold.

The name "Air Kaoru" stands for: "AIR represents air, K stands for Kuraray's dissolving thread, A represents Asano Nenshi's technology, O symbolizes the sensibility of Oboro towels, and L stands for living together (LIVE)."

The factory is equipped with 20 twisting machines, 6 splicing machines, and 1 steam setter for dissolving water-soluble threads. It serves as the hub of Asano Nenshi's production department, showcasing their unique twisting technology and promoting "Made in Futaba" to the world.

The facility is open for tours, allowing visitors to learn about the company's history. The building features glass walls that provide a sense of openness.



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