

# Aso International: Leading Orthodontic Innovation

Aso International blends traditional expertise and digital technology to lead Japan's orthodontic industry on a global scale.

In recent years, the Japanese healthcare industry has faced criticism for lagging behind its Western counterparts, primarily due to regulatory hurdles, price competitiveness and a lack of internationalization. However, since the late former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic reforms, Japanese companies have made significant strides in niche medical fields. A shining example of this progress is Aso International, a company that has become a leader in orthodontic solutions.

Operating in the highly specialized orthodontic sector, Aso International requires staff to hold national qualifications as dental technicians, ensuring high standards and limited competition. "As a dental technology company, we want to make the most of our more than 40 years of experience and technology," says Toshimasa Aso, president of Aso International.

Aso International collaborates with renowned companies such as Kuraray Noritake Dental Supply, leveraging unique materials and development capabilities to enhance its products. This collaboration embodies the Japanese kaizen philosophy of continuous improvement. "We work together with Japanese material manufacturers to create unique solutions that improve the quality of our products and services," explains Mr. Aso.

To help medical professionals keep pace with technological advancements, the company frequently organizes seminars. "These seminars are regularly attended by eminent professors who lecture on how to use the digital equipment developed by us," Mr. Aso notes. The company has been developing AI technology for orthodontic design, utilizing CT scans and intraoral scanners to align tooth roots and jawbones accurately.

With Japan's aging population, dental health for the elderly is a growing concern.

"Our company's strength lies in the fusion of analogue and digital technology."

Toshimasa Aso,  
President,  
Aso International

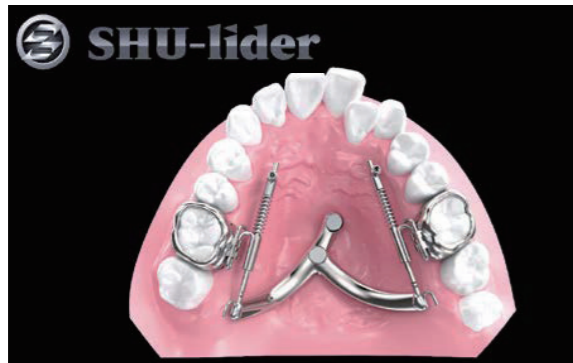


Aso International offers solutions tailored to this demographic. Reflecting on his own experience, the company president says: "Orthodontics has an important role in changing people's lives." He believes in the significance of preventative dentistry, emphasizing the importance of maintaining healthy teeth to avoid the need for dentures and other inserts.

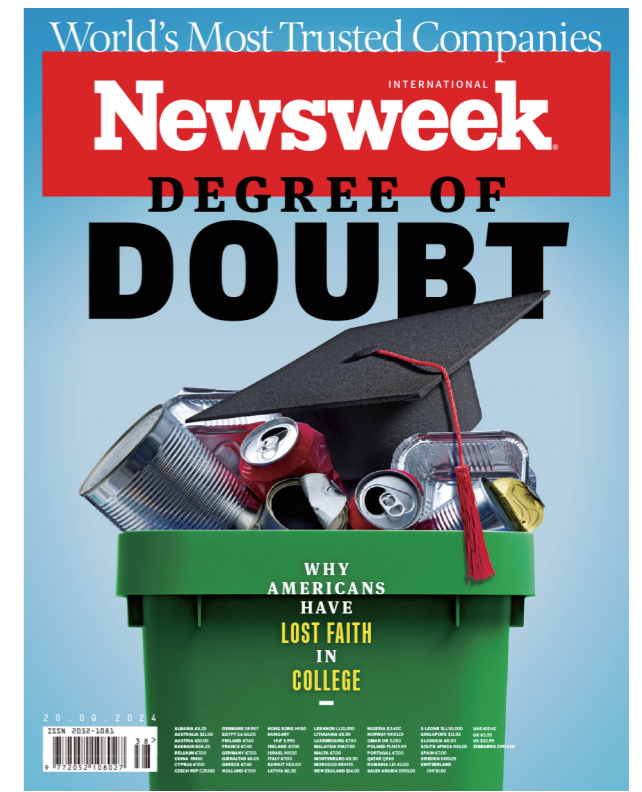
Aso International's commitment to innovation and quality is evident in its product offerings. "Our company's strength lies in the fusion of analogue technology of skilled dental technicians and digital technology in the manufacturing process," Mr. Aso explains. The company's flagship products, such as SYMPHONY, are designed to provide high-quality treatment consistently.

Looking ahead, Aso International plans to expand its presence in the U.S. market, leveraging digital tools and a robust network of partner laboratories. "We envision a business model where we open a base in San Jose, which will act as a huge data center," says Mr. Aso. The company aims to increase its manufacturing workforce and expand its market reach.

Reflecting on the company's journey, Mr. Aso says: "I believe that by the time you return within a decade, Aso International will have grown to become the world's number one name in orthodontics that you can trust." With a blend of traditional expertise and cutting-edge technology, Aso International is poised to continue its trajectory of innovation and global leadership in the orthodontic field.



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## Japan's Medical Sector Finds Global Solutions to Domestic Challenges

By Bernard Thompson

In a world where aging populations and demographic shifts are creating profound global challenges, societies everywhere are struggling to find effective solutions. With the oldest population in the world, Japan is facing these complexities ahead of others, enabling its medical and dental device sector not just to respond to these global issues, but to create a roadmap for solving them.

As society shifts from curative care to prevention, Japan's medical sector is leveraging its historical expertise and advanced technologies. Satoshi Yamaguchi, president of Kuraray Noritake Dental, a company that is pushing the boundaries of dental science through experimentation with bioactive materials, attests to this: "The countermeasure to Japan's aging population is to increase the number of healthy seniors," he notes. Mr. Yamaguchi believes AI and digital tools are vital in enabling self-health maintenance, reducing medical expenses, and improving quality of life.

Japanese products have long been synonymous with excellence. Toshimasa Aso, president of Aso International, whose company is developing AI-based orthodontic solutions, argues that this reputation stems from a cultural commitment to superior quality and service. "The strength of Japanese companies lies in the diligence of the Japanese. People

in this country are very serious and self-disciplined." He believes this mentality, driven by a deep consideration for others, permeates both business and life. This ethos gives Japanese companies a competitive edge, allowing them to outpace international rivals.

At the heart of these efforts is the need to reduce medical expenses and improve patient outcomes. Keiichi Yamada, president of Daiken Medical Corporation, whose products are revolutionizing cancer care and who plans to tackle diabetes next, focuses on such innovations. "Reducing medical expenses is key for our R&D," Mr. Yamada says. He highlights the development of minimally invasive surgery techniques that allow for quicker recovery times and shorter hospital stays—critical for a future where healthcare efficiency will be paramount.

Collaboration and strategic acquisitions are also crucial. Olympus Corporation, a global leader in endoscopic applications and renowned for its commitment to improving healthcare efficiency worldwide, recently advanced its AI and digitalization efforts through the acquisition of Odin Vision, a firm specializing in AI endoscopy. "We are very happy with the way the integration of Odin Vision has gone so far," says Dr. Karsten Klose, global head of Olympus Digital Unit. Odin Vision's AI expertise has

become a "key pillar" in Olympus's Intelligent Endoscopy Ecosystem, improving patient care and reducing costs.

However, with a shifting global market, Japanese companies recognize the urgency of staying ahead and not resting on their laurels. Norigi Kurihara, president of AuBEX Corporation, which expanded into the medical field three decades ago and has been a global niche leader in precision technology for pen nib processing, captures this succinctly: "Today, the second-generation pen nib business and the medical business are the two pillars," he says. "I believe that we are now at the starting point. We need to expand our business, invest more, and develop our market to lead to new applications and possibilities for our technology." Mr. Kurihara notes that this dual focus requires companies to optimize production and find efficient ways to sustain operations.

And for Mr. Aso, there are reasons to be optimistic. "As new technologies continue to emerge, medical practice needs to be transformed," he says. "We want to make the most of our more than 40 years of experience and technology." By embracing change and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in medical technology, Japan will not only thrive but also lead in global healthcare through its medical industry.