

05. Reading Business Books by Kawakami Nobuo: Making the “Unexplainable” NicoNico Douga into an “Unprecedented” Business

SUZUKI Hirohito

NicoNico Douga (Nikoniko dōga ニコニコ動画) was born in 2006 by pirating from YouTube, which hosts numerous illegal video clips from TV shows and movies. Therefore, NicoNico Douga is based on piracy.

Kawakami Nobuo is the founder of NicoNico Douga. He has written several business books which argue that the main purpose of management is to survive in the world, not to compete with other companies. In this context, he considers not only piratical acts on the web but also pirating things from all over the business world.

“Niconico” (*nikoniko*) means smiley-smiley and “douga” (*dōga*) means video. This naming aims to make fun of serious video, movie or TV companies. *Nikoniko* is often used in an unserious sense.

In addition, the name of DWANGO Corporation limited, which runs NicoNico Douga and which was founded by Mr. Kawakami, is derived from “Dial-up Wide Area Network Gaming Operation.” This is the name of an online service that a company in the US provided during the 1990s. However, the name DWANGO is unrelated to NicoNico Douga. In this context, the name of DWANGO itself is “unexplainable” and “unprecedented.” To clarify why these “unexplainable” and “unprecedented” entities of DWANGO and NicoNico Douga still exist today, it is necessary to read Kawakami’s books.

In them, he insists that business should be “unexplainable” and “unprecedented.” This raises the question: what are the “unexplainable” and “unprecedented” parts of his business endeavors? He says they are “an unreasonable sense of love for my own preparedness to receive inevitable sacrifice,” and “a way of living that is doing foolish things [while] accepting my own foolishness.” In other words, he has an excessive logical attitude based on non-logic. His attitude reflects his way of piracy that makes fun of the information technology business, which tricks consumers by pretending to be “free” or “open.”