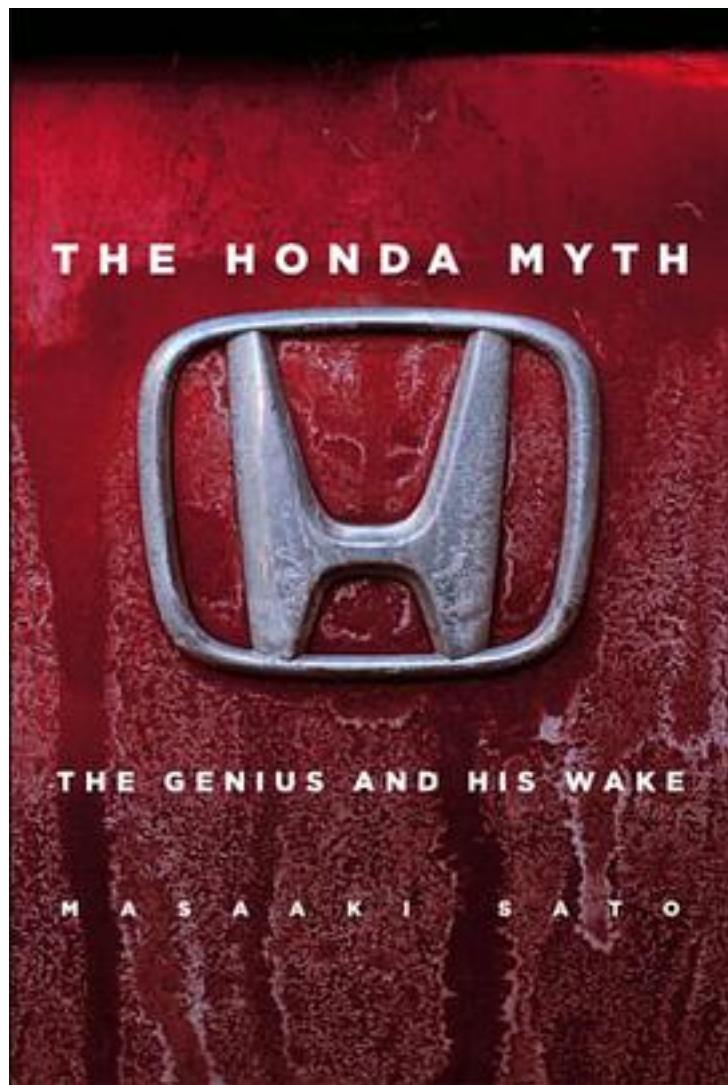


The Honda Myth



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出版者:

出版时间:2006-12

装帧:

isbn:9781932234268

From the top Japanese auto-industry journalist comes this inimitably informed account of Honda Motor Company's birth out of the ashes of World War II and subsequent rise. As gripping as it is enlightening on far more than its main subject, Sato's unbiased reckoning won him Japan's premier non-fiction award. Available in English for the first time with a new chapter exclusive to this edition and prefaced by Paul Ingrassia, *The Honda Myth* is indispensable reading for industry insiders, business leaders and car enthusiasts.

The first Japanese automaker to open a factory in the U.S., Honda grew its North American share in the 1970's with the introduction of the first environmentally friendly car, the Civic. Just as the manufacturer's combination of engineering excellence, racing dominance, and risk-taking was driving it into the international spotlight, however its trademark free-spiritedness threatening to take a backseat to bureaucracy and complacency.

Honda was the brainchild of two very different men. One, a genius engineer who never went to college but became the face of the company-Soichiro Honda. The other, a shrewd businessman who breezed into management and directed behind the scenes-Takeo Fujisawa. Apart, they may have never met international success, but together they made their mark. Yet, after Honda and Fujisawa's retirement, and decisively after the departure of heir apparent Shoichiro Irimajiri, Honda Motor looks like what it once seemed incapable of becoming-a faceless firm.

Overshadowed by the ever-changing competition in areas like F1 racing and low-pollution engine technology that were its pride, the old hothouse of invention is less sexy these days. The *Honda Myth* argues that the cult worship of Soichiro Honda that Takeo Fujisawa fostered, at first to the firm's great benefit, worked against it in subtle ways as well. Though the company's future looks bright, it offers no beaming face.

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