Kazuhiko (Kay) Nishi (President, Ascii Corporation)

西和彦「アスキー 社長]

Words alone cannot describe the achievements of young Nishi, who was the "face" of the emerging personal computer industry in Japan. In 1977, when Nishi was still a university student, he established Ascii Publishing with two of his friends. Not being satisfied with just publishing, he traveled alone to the U.S. to carry out direct negotiations with Bill Gates. In 1978, he successfully acquired a contract as agent for BASIC in the Far East. But the term was limited to one year. Gates did not have much confidence in his new agent and expected to cancel the contract in a year's time for reasons of poor performance. However, Nishi succeeded in capturing major Japanese manufacturers one after another, and became a chief initiator of the explosive BASIC boom in Japan. In 1980, he accounted for a large percentage of Microsoft's total sales, and in recognition of his outstanding performance, he was appointed vice president of Far East Operations from 1979 to 1986. During that period, Ascii continued to expand with publishing and software as its two main concerns. After canceling its contract with Microsoft in 1986, Ascii has built on its own corporate character and has diversified into new areas such as semiconductors, personal computer communications, business software,

彼が生まれた頃 という言葉とは ーソナルコンピュ

multimedia, and movies.

として、若き日の西和彦に与えられた呼称 は数しれない。大学在籍中の1977年に、二 人の仲間とアスキー出版を創設するが、彼 の夢は単に出版にとどまらなかった。米国 マイクロソフトへ単身乗り込み、ビル・ゲ イツに直談判。翌78年には、BASICの極東代 理店契約を取り付けた。しかし、契約期限 は1年。ゲイツはこの時、さほど大きな期待 をかけておらず、I年後には業績の悪さを理 由に契約を解消することになるだろうと考



カーを次々と攻略し、国内における爆発的 なBASICブームの火付け役になった。80年度 には、マイクロソフト全体の数割を占める 売り上げ実績を記録し、その功績を認めら れて79年から86年までマイクロソフトの極 東担当副社長を勤めている。以降アスキー は、出版とソフトウェアを両輪に拡大を続 けていくのだが、86年にマイクロソフトと の契約を解消してからは独自色を強め、半 導体、パソコン通信、ビジネスソフト、マ ルチメディア、映画など多角的な新規路線 を打ち出している。

"The words "Personal Computer" have been my friend since his birth."

日本に芽生えたばかりのパソコン産業の「顔」

PEOPLE (9)

