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JAPANESE LEAN TERMS

WHAT THEY MEAN

FROM GENBA TO YOKOTEN: THE WORDS BEHIND TOYOTA'S SYSTEM

The real place	Waste and workplace	Flow and pull	Quality	Improvement	Leadership
01 Genba 現場 The real place, where value is made. Often written gemba. "Hold the meeting at the mill, beside the board."	02 Genbutsu 現物 The real thing: the actual part, machine or record. "Bring the cracked coupling, not a photo of it."	03 Genjitsu 現実 The real facts, gathered where it happens. "Count the stops yourself before trusting the log."	04 Genchi genbutsu 現地現物 Go and see the actual place and thing. "Two meetings argued; one walk found the blocked nozzle."	05 Mieruka 見える化 Making things visible so problems cannot hide. "A full lane is a signal anyone can read."	
06 Kizuki 気付 Noticing: the sensitivity to spot small abnormalities. "A new noise in the uncoiler, caught on day one."	07 Jishuken 自主研 Self-study: leaders improve a real process hands-on. "Managers spend a week fixing a supplier's flow."	08 Muda 無駄 Waste: activity the customer would not pay for. "Four crane lifts to reach one coil."	09 Mura ムラ Unevenness in demand or workload. "Idle for two weeks, overtime for two."	10 Muri 無理 Overburden on people or machines. "Over-feeding the saw burns through blades."	
11 Mottainai もったいない Regret at wasting anything still useful. "Off-cuts reused as test coupons."	12 Seiri 整理 Sort: remove what is not needed here. "Red tags clear two pallets of dead spares."	13 Seiton 整頓 Set in order: a marked home for everything. "Weld wire racked beside the welder."	14 Seiso 清掃 Shine: clean, and inspect while cleaning. "Wiping the hydrotester finds a leaking fitting."	15 Seiketsu 清潔 Standardise: make the first three S's routine. "A five-minute end-of-shift checklist."	
16 Shitsuke 躰 Sustain: the discipline to keep the standard. "Weekly 5S audit, scored by another team."	17 Kanban 看板 Signboard: a signal to make or move a set quantity. "Empty rack, card returns, one rack is made."	18 Heijunka 平準化 Levelling volume and mix over time. "Heavy and light wall alternate every day."	19 Mizusumashi 水すまし Water spider: a material handler on a fixed route. "A 30-minute loop keeps operators at their stations."	20 Chaku-chaku チャクチャク Load-load: the operator only loads; machines unload. "One operator runs three stations by walking the loop."	
21 Hanedashi 跳ね出し Automatic unloading so the next part can go straight in. "The bevel machine ejects the pipe itself."	22 Nagara ながら While doing: two activities combined. "A visual check done on the walk between stations."	23 Shojinka 少人化 Flexible staffing that changes with demand. "Three operators on a busy day, two on a quiet one."	24 Yamazumi 山積み Stack up: a chart of work stacked against takt. "The overloaded station shows at a glance."	25 Jundate 順立て Delivering parts in the exact order of use. "Couplings arrive in threading sequence."	
26 Jidoka 自動化 Automation with a human touch: stop at any abnormality. "The mill stops when the seam temperature drifts."	27 Poka-yoke ポカヨケ Mistake-proofing. "The wrong coupling simply will not fit the gauge."	28 Andon アンドン Lantern: a signal that calls for help. "Team leader at the station within one takt."	29 Ji kotei kanketsu 自工程完結 Complete quality within your own process. "Each station confirms its output before passing it on."	30 Ato kotei wa okyakusama 後工程はお客様 The next process is your customer. "Never send finishing a pipe you would not accept."	
31 Fuguai 不具合 An abnormality or defect, often marked with a tag. "Tagged during cleaning, fixed by Friday."	32 Dantotsu ダントツ Overwhelmingly the best, far ahead of rivals. "Target: claims at a tenth of the industry rate."	33 Mizenboushi 未然防止 Preventing problems before they happen. "Review every design change for what could go wrong."	34 Kaizen 改善 Change for the better, in small steps, by everyone. "A stop block on the saw removes a measuring step."	35 Kaikaku 改革 Radical change of a process or system. "The batch area rebuilt as two cells in one outage."	
36 Kakushin 革新 Innovation: renewal beyond step-by-step kaizen. "A new forming method, not a faster old one."	37 Kaizen teian 改善提案 Suggestion system for small ideas people do themselves. "One implemented idea per person per month."	38 Jishu hozen 自主保全 Autonomous maintenance by operators. "Operators own cleaning, lubrication and bolt checks."	39 Kobetsu kaizen 個別改善 Focused improvement on one specific loss. "A team attacks small stops at the uncoiler."	40 Dandorigae 段取り替え Changeover from one product to the next. "Clock it from last good pipe to first good pipe."	
41 Karakuri kaizen からくり改善 Low-cost automation with gravity, levers and springs. "A gravity chute returns empty bins."	42 Hansei 反省 Honest reflection, even after a success. "A smooth outage still yields two near-misses to fix."	43 Hoshin kanri 方針管理 Direction management: aligning goals at every level. "Every plan must show which goal it supports."	44 Nemawashi 根回し Going around the roots: build agreement before deciding. "Each crew lead is heard before the meeting."	45 Yokoten 横展 Horizontal deployment of a proven improvement. "Mill 1's guide-roll fix copied to mill 2."	
46 Obeya 大部屋 Big room: the project team's visual war room. "Schedule, issues and safety plan on the walls."	47 Kamishibai 紙芝居 Paper theatre: card-based quick audits. "Draw a card, check the standard, flip it green."	48 Sensei 先生 Teacher: a coach who teaches by asking. "Go and time it again, at the machine."	49 Shusa 主査 Chief engineer, owning a product end to end. "One leader, from concept to launch."	50 Hourensou 報連相 Report, contact, consult: keep people informed early. "Bad news travels up the same shift."	