



# DAIHATSU



**Official name:** Daihatsu Motor Ltd.

**Owned by:** Mostly Toyota (51%) plus massive public shareholding.

**Current situation:** Daihatsu has essentially become a subsidiary of Toyota, with an increased use of Toyota components in newer models.

**Chances of survival:** Good. However, it's likely that the Daihatsu brand will be gradually absorbed into Toyota, so we may not see Daihatsu-badged cars for too much longer •



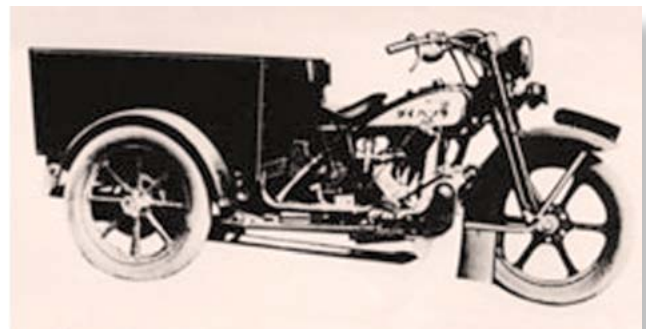
# A brief history of Daihatsu



The Daihatsu Compagno

**F**OUNDED IN 1907 as the *Hatsudoki Seizo Co Ltd*, Daihatsu originally produced engines only, and did not start making motor vehicles until 1930.

Daihatsu started producing a three-wheeler car in 1951 and began exporting a three-wheeler motorbike in 1957.



Limited success led the company to drop the vehicle and a more conventional four wheel car, the Compagno, was released in 1963.

However, Daihatsu was too small to survive by itself, and began a partnership with Toyota in 1967.



The Daihatsu Gran Move

With Toyota's backing Daihatsu has thrived on what it does well – small, nippy, economical four cylinder cars.



Despite being very reliable, early Daihatsus were tinny death-traps and appear frequently in lists of unsafe cars from this era (later models are not such a risk and current ones are generally fine).

A few years back, Toyota Motor Corporation closed down the Daihatsu vehicle sales arm of its Australian operations. This is less serious than it sounds: Daihatsu as a company is gradually merging its models with those of its parent company Toyota. Thus, the next model of the Daihatsu Sirion and the Toyota Yaris were much the same vehicle.

After plummeting sales in Europe, Daihatsu also withdrew from that market.

Over the longer term, there is little sense in Toyota continuing with the Daihatsu brand.

Outside of Japan, Daihatsu is a fringe player in an increasingly globalised car industry. Thus, Daihatsu's days as a separate company appear to be numbered •

