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会見

INTERVIEW

“The brand is the ultimate differentiation”

Interview with Professor Dominique Turpin, Dean of External Relations at IMD

Professor Dominique Turpin graduated from the ESSCA in France and earned a PhD in economics from Sophia University in Tokyo. He worked in Japan and regularly publishes articles and books in Japanese. Regularly working with the top Japanese companies, Professor Turpin has developed over the years a strong understanding of Japanese companies and the Japanese business environment.

He served as IMD President for 6 years. His current research focuses on brand management.

Could you please introduce your professional background to our readers?

I went for the first time to Japan in 1978 and lived there for several years in the 80s. At this time, the Japanese economy was strong and Japanese companies were at the top.

When I joined the IMD, I was among the few non-Japanese to have both a theoretical and working experience with Japanese companies.

I am focusing on marketing and strategy, but not only. I conducted many customized programs for companies, some among the largest in the world. Over time, the IMD has developed tight bonds with Japanese companies.



Professor Dominique Turpin. Photo courtesy of IMD

One of my first clients in IMD was Sony and since then many others Japanese companies have come to us for customized programs or consultancies.

Can you briefly introduce the IMD?

The IMD is an independent business school located in Lausanne. It is the merger of the former International Management Institute (established by Alcan) and the “Institut pour l’Etude des Méthodes de Direction de l’Entreprise (established by Nestlé).

The IMD focuses only on business management. We have programs for individuals including the Master and Executive Mas-

ter of Business Administration (MBA and EMBA). We also offer corporate oriented services with customised programs.

You were President of the IMD for six years, what were the challenges you faced?

The main challenge was certainly to find the right professors to recruit. The IMD is business-oriented and the people we are looking for need to have a professional background with corporate executive management.

As a recent trend, I would also say that the competition is increasing, especially with the arrival of consultant firms.

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“The brand is the ultimate differentiation”

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INTERVIEW

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To face this competition it is vital to remain customer-oriented by adapting our offer to the companies' needs. To achieve this goal we are providing shorter programs available online or developing what I call “edutainment”. It is a subtle balance to find allowing you to catch the attention of the audience in order to deliver the message in the most efficient way. Like exports-oriented industries, the high value of the Swiss franc is also a challenge for us because most of our customers and students come from abroad.

This said, I supposed we managed those challenges pretty well considering that the IMD has been ranked among the very best business school for the last years (8 years in a row as 1st or in top 3 depending on the category).

Could tell us more about your long working experience in Japan and with Japanese companies?

Japanese companies tend to focus on the Japanese market. They miss a global mindset. Among others, our task is to help them to develop this global vision and to implement it. Nobody knows a company better than its employees; this is why we do not tell them what they should do but rather challenge them in order for them to find the solution.

In your opinion what are their

strengths and weaknesses of Japanese companies?

Japan has a long history and strong culture. Japanese companies know very well the needs and expectations of their domestic market in which most of them do the quasi-totality of their business. This is great on many aspects since they are diligent, have a long-term orientation and provide high-quality products and services. A customer can expect a Japanese product or service to be excellent.

On the other hand, having so much in common is sometimes a handicap when Japanese companies want to develop their overseas business. This is why I strongly encourage them to develop their entrepreneur spirit and seek diversity in every possible way: gender, generation, nationality, etc.

A company usually follows the four same steps when they expand abroad: 1. export the product; 2. export the management; 3. localize the management by hiring local people; 4. no longer care about the nationality of your management.

Most Japanese companies are still on stage two or three and therefore might lack a global mindset. In the end what matters is who the best person for the job is.

Why do companies seek for your expertise?

One aspect of the IMD that companies appreciate is the fact that we are neutral and we do not have an

ideology. We will not tell you this kind of management is better than another. We try to understand the need of the company and help them to find a suitable solution to achieve their goals.

I would add as well that we are not narrow specialists but rather generalists. Therefore we can fulfill the needs of customers coming from very different fields.

As an expert in brand management, what are the latest trends in this field?

The brand is the ultimate differentiation. Without a brand you are simply commodity providers. Without a brand you go for the cheapest. Today, people have plenty of choice for everything. So the question is: how can I bring the customer to choose my product?

A good brand results from long-term efforts. Ultimately, the brand is the result of all the good decisions you made.

One of the latest trends is the rising importance of the brand purpose. People do not only buy a product because of its good quality but also because of the company's positive image. For instance, social and environmental commitments are important for the consumers. Companies have to be aware of it; especially on nowadays with social media amplifying every decision good or bad.

White Paper on International Economy and Trade 2019

The Japanese Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry (METI) published its annual White Paper on International Economy and Trade 2019. This year's edition highlights the dichotomy between global trade that has never been as interdependent as it is today and the rise of protectionism that affects the global value chains and threatens the multilateral trading system.

Regarding Japan specifically, the country's goods trade expanded in terms of both imports and exports. However, as the growth in the value of imports (9.7%), which was mainly due to a resource price rise, was higher than the growth in the value of exports (4.1%), Japan recorded a trade deficit for the first time in three years (since 2015).

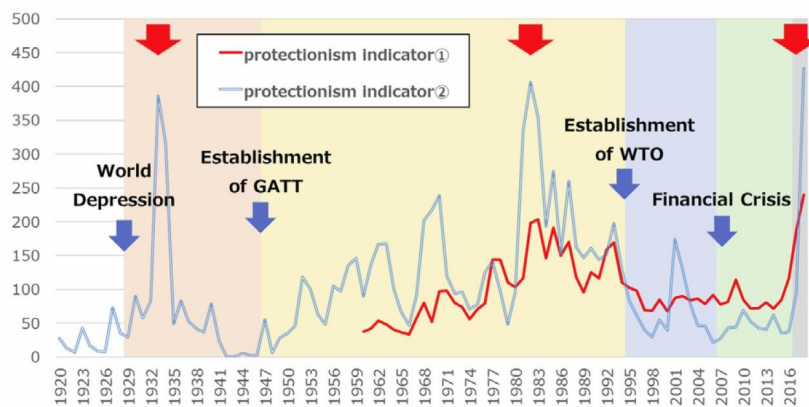
The main reason why the growth in exports was weak is presumably that exports of general and electrical machinery decreased in the second half of the year because the semiconductor market was cyclically weak in a contraction phase and because the Chinese economy slowed down.

Source: [METI](#)

活動

ACTIVITY

The ratio of newspaper articles related to "protectionism"



Indicator 1: International Press / Indicator 2 Japanese press

Japanese upper house elections

Japan had elections on July 21st; 124 of the 245 seats of the House of Councillors were contested.

Members of the Japanese upper house are elected for six years but only half the seats are contested at once. The election for the other half will take place in three years.

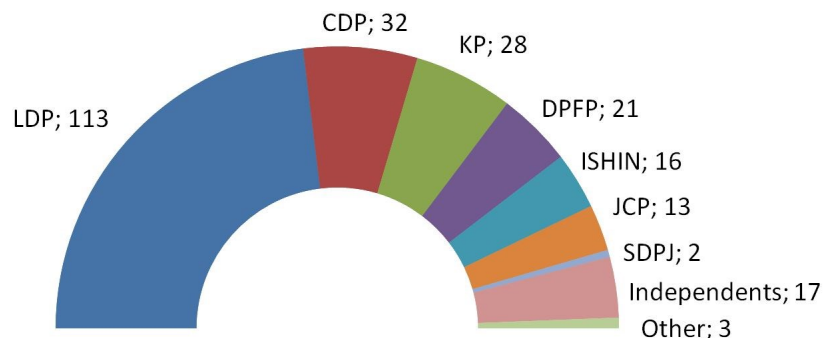
The leading coalition of Prime Minister Abe (LDP in blue and KP in green) kept a strong majority in the upper house and has therefore secured his control of the two chambers of the Diet. The Liberal Democratic Party remains by far the largest party in the upper house, with 113 of the 245 seats but suffered the loss of 12 seats compared to the pre-election situation. Prime Minister Abe said that Japanese voters have chosen stability

and he will go on with the scheduled economic reforms such as the increase of the VAT from 8 to 10%. Nevertheless, amending the constitution will be difficult, since it re-

quires a two thirds "super-majority" in both chambers. The participation rate (48%) was historically low in comparison with previous elections.

動向

TREND



House of Councillors as for 22 July 2019.

Parties are represented by size not by political orientation.

Full name of the parties on the chart from left to right:

Liberal Democratic Party; Constitutional Democratic Party; Komeito Party; Democratic Party for the People; Ishin; Japanese Communist Party; Social Democratic Party; Independents

Japan's recent contributions to the space exploration

革新

INNOVATION

This month we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the lunar mission Apollo 11. It was the very first time a human being put a foot on the moon.

Since then, many small and big contributions have helped humanity to better understand its origins.

The Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is a leading contributor to space exploration and recently achieved two world firsts.

The Hayabusa 2, an asteroid explorer [we already talked about](#), successfully achieved its second touchdown sequence. The sequence included the discharge of a projectile in order to break the surface and collect underground samples. Having achieved this complex sequence Hayabusa 2 will come back on earth with the precious sample of the asteroid Ryugu.

Ryugu is classified as a C-type asteroid possibly as old as the formation of the solar system.

A few weeks later, another JAXA experiment contributed to future long term human activities in space.

On-board the Japanese Experiment Module of the International Space Station, Scientifics experimented with long-term habitation in a moon-like gravitational environment.

The moon's gravity is one-sixth of the earth's gravity and the long-term effects of its gravity on living creatures as never been tested.

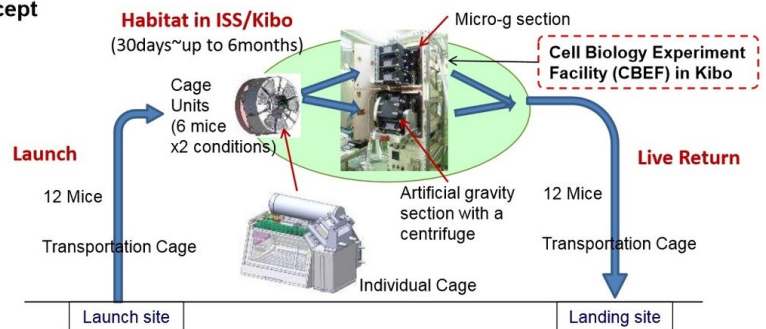
To achieve this experiment, Japanese scientists created a research platform able to simulate gravity between 0G (deep space) to 1G (earth gravity).

All the mice were successfully returned back to the Earth alive.

Sources:

[Hayabusa 2](#) and [ISS Experiment](#)

Concept



The cell biology experiment facility in "Kibo" (ISS Japanese Experiment Module)

Agenda

日程

AGENDA

- ✓ September 29: Fête Japonaise

The 9th edition of the Fête Japonaise will take place on September 29 in Carouge. [Details](#)

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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