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会見

INTERVIEW

New owner of Japanese grocery shop in Geneva

Hirotsugu Kodera purchased the grocery shop *Uchino alimentation japonaise*, located next to the Geneva station (Rue de Zurich 45). The grocery shop is selling a variety of Japanese products, including bento (Japanese home-packed meal), foodstuffs and non-food products. It also provides food ingredients to hotels and restaurants in Geneva and across Switzerland.

From Kyoto to Geneva

Hirotsugu Kodera settled in Switzerland in 2003.

“During my studies at the Ritsumeikan University of Kyoto, I met a Swiss woman who was studying the Japanese language. I was aged only 19. Then I visited Lausanne several times. I moved to Switzerland in 2003. At this time, I believed I would stay only one or two years...”, Hirotsugu Kodera said.

He then continued his studies in French literature and economics at the University of Geneva.

He started as an employee of *Uchino alimentation japonaise* in January 2011. “At that time, my employer had proposed to run the shop, but I wished first to work as an employee and gain experience in this business. After five



Hirotsugu Kodera
Uchino Alimentation japonaise

years of experience I decided to buy the shop, becoming its owner in March 2016, and running a staff of five employees”, he explained.

Japanese most popular products

Beside the Japanese traditional ingredients, such as soy sauce, rice, dashi (fish soup), miso soup and miso paste, some other Japanese products have become very popular.

All the products made with matcha (ground power of green tea), such as cakes, biscuits, chocolate are popular.

“A lot of clients asked me about organic products. I noticed they

are becoming increasingly popular in Switzerland”, Hirotsugu Kodera said. His shop sells a large variety of organic products, such as miso paste, soba and udon noodles, rice, soy sauce, natto (fermented soy beans)...

And many clients also asked him about gluten-free products.

Japanese home-packed meal bento sells very well. He proposes a greater variety of bento (sashimi, sushi, teriyaki chicken, fried pork, grilled fishes...).

Japanese alcoholic beverages also become more popular, such as whiskey, shochu (distilled beverage) and sake.

Importing foodstuffs from Japan

The shop does not import all the products from Japan. Meats and fishes are purchased in Switzerland or Germany.

However, when the shop imports the products from Japan, it faces some difficulties. “Following the Brexit vote, the value of the Swiss franc against the Japanese yen has decreased significantly. Since the beginning of the year, it declined about 20%. The volatility of exchange rate affects severely our margins”, Hirotsugu Kodera said.

New owner of Japanese grocery shop in Geneva

会見

INTERVIEW

In addition, several administrative procedures had been introduced after the 2011 earthquake and Fukushima accident. However, he noted that most of them have been lifted, except for some products and some prefectures.

Plans for the future

“When I came in Switzerland, I planned to open an izakaya restaurant — a type of Japanese restaurant where the customer can order

foods and drinks throughout the course, and share them by everyone at the table, like in Spanish tapas restaurants. So, if the shop goes well, I would like to open an izakaya restaurant with original Japanese dishes”, Hirotsugu Kodera

Japan's current economic situation

動向

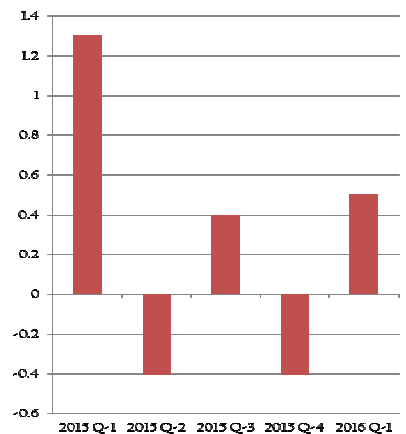
SITUATION

According to the Cabinet Office, “concerning short-term prospects, the economy is expected toward recovery, supported by the effects of the policies, while employment and income situation is improving.” (Monthly Economic Report, June issue).

Japan's GDP grew 0.5% from the previous quarter (1.9% at annualized rate) in the first quarter of 2016 (January to March), according to a second preliminary estimate issued on June 8th 2016.

Japan's exports declined 11.3% in May 2016 against the same month in the preceding year, due to the decrease of exports in China (-14.9%), in the United States (-10.7%) and to a less extent in Western Europe (-3.5%).

The average of consumption expenditures per household was 338,001 yen, up 1.4% in real terms from the previous year. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.2% in April 2016 (against 3.4% in April 2015).



Development of Real GDP
Quarterly, seasonally adjusted series
Cabinet Office

Statement on UK's decision to leave the EU

政策

POLICY

The following statement has been delivered by Japan's Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso and Governor of the Bank of Japan Haruhiko Kuroda, on June 24th, 2016.

“In the referendum on June 23 in the UK, a majority voted for a leave from the EU. We remain vigilant of any risks that are caused by this consequence to the global economy and to financial and foreign exchange markets. We will carefully monitor further developments. The stability of financial markets including the foreign exchange mar-

ket is crucially important. Excess volatility and disorderly movements in exchange rates can have adverse implications for economic and financial stability and hence are not desirable. The Ministry of Finance will monitor further developments of the foreign exchange market more carefully than before and take appropriate measures as necessary. Such measures are consistent with the agreements in G7 and G20. We are also aware of risks related to liquidity funding in foreign currencies. In this regard, a

network of currency swap arrangements is already established by the central banks of major countries. The Bank of Japan will take appropriate measures as necessary, including activation of this network. In order to ensure the growth of the global economy and stability of financial markets including the foreign exchange market, the Government and the Bank of Japan will work closely on these issues in cooperation with the other G7 countries”.

Meeting of heads of Japanese companies in Geneva

The general meeting of the Japan Club of Geneva's Chamber of Commerce and Industry section took place in Geneva, on June 16th, 2016. Chaired by JETRO Geneva Director General, Masashi Nakazono, the meeting gathered a total of 34 participants from Japanese companies in the Eaux-Vives restaurant. Several speeches were delivered by Ambassador Ms. Misako Kaji, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva and head of the Japanese Consulate in Geneva, Miho Habel, President of the Japan Club of Geneva, and Masashi Nakazono. Tsukasa Ohbayashi, Nikkei's editor-in-chief for Europe, made a presentation about the debate in the United Kingdom on the Brexit... a few days before the decision



Japan Club of Geneva's meeting in Eaux-Vives restaurant, Geneva, June 16th, 2016

was actually taken. The participants appreciated very much this information, since many Japanese companies in Geneva will be affected by the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European

Union.

Participants also took the opportunity of the dinner to share their views on the current situation.

活動

ACTIVITY

Exhibition of Ito Shinsui's works in Zurich



Zurich-based Museum Rietberg will exhibit prints by Japanese graphic artist Ito Shinsui. The exhibition will take place from September 17th 2016 to January 8th 2017.

Born in 1898, Ito Shinsui is considered as one of Japan's best known graphic artist.

The Museum will exhibit famous prints depicting beautiful women in kimonos as well as Japanese landscapes.

Itō Shinsui (1898-1972)
Vor dem Spiegel
Farbholzdruck, Japan, 1916
© Courtesy Taiyo no Hikari Foundation, Japan

"Before the Mirror" (1916) is Ito's first major print, representing a young woman wearing a deep red kimono (see picture).

Ito set up his own independent studio in 1927; and drafted propaganda art during the Pacific War. After the second world war, he was acknowledged as one of the most prominent Japanese artist.

Museum Rietberg
Tue-Sun 10am-5pm, Wed 10am-8pm
Closed on Mondays
Gablerstrasse 15, 8002 Zürich

文化

CULTURE

革新
INNOVATION

Japanese robot PARO serves in care facilities

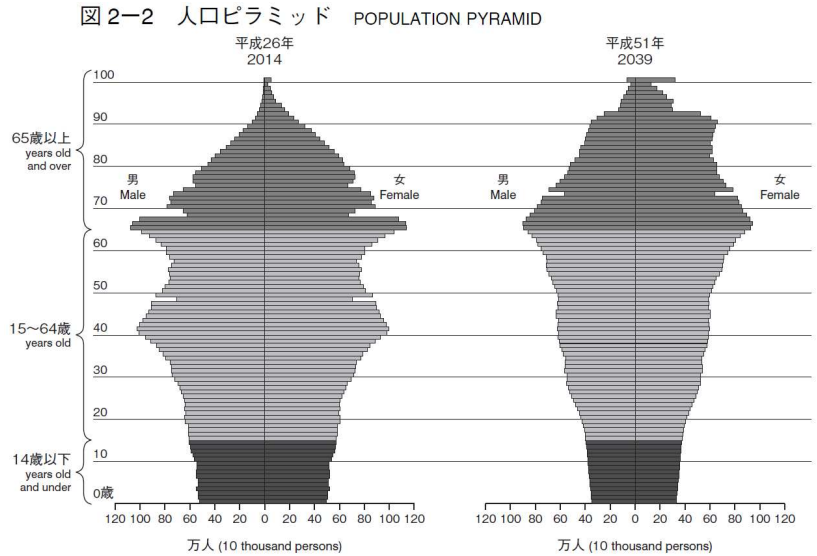
Both Japan and Switzerland face issues related to the aging population. In Japan, 26% of the Japanese population is aged more than 65¹, against 18% in Switzerland².

Therapeutic robot for hospitals and nursing homes

The Intelligent System Research Institute of Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) has developed a therapeutic robot baby harp seal named PARO. It is intended to serve in care facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes.

Developed by Takanori Shibata in 1993, PARO is now in its ninth generation. When switched on, it can open and close its eyes, raise its head, wriggle its tail. Further it can recognize approximately 50 words and learn to behave in a way that the user prefers.

Thanks to PARO, patients in care facilities can benefit from animal therapy without the inconvenience



Population pyramid
Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

of live animals.

Several Swiss nursing homes have already purchased PARO, especially in the Canton of Geneva.

¹ As of October 1st 2014, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

² As of the end of 2015, Swiss Federal Statistical Office



Intelligent System Co., Ltd. CTO,
Takanori Shibata

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>



Japan External Trade Organization

JETRO Geneva
80, Rue de Lausanne
1202 Geneva
Phone: 022/732 13 04
Fax: 022/732 07 72
E-mail: SWG@jetro.go.jp