



The site that can help you explore business opportunities with Japanese businessmen and learn about Japanese economy and business practices

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JETRO Bangkok
Japan External Trade Organization สำนักงานส่งเสริมการค้าระหว่างประเทศ (เออีทีโร กรุงเทพฯ) HEAD OFFICE

The JETRO Bangkok Website
is your window to exploring and strengthening
Thai-Japanese business relationships . . .

JAPANESE ENGLISH

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- 17th Survey of Investment-Related Cost Comparison in Major Cities and Regions in Asia

★ EXPLORING JAPAN PAGE 14

- Article of "Fashion as Cultural Policy:- The Path to Be a Brand" released in Japan Spotlight of March/April 2007 issue.
- Highlights of Survey of Business Sentiment on Japanese Corporations in Thailand for autumn of 2006 released by Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok

J E T R O B a n g k o k U p d a t e

1. JETRO introduces 3 new Japanese staff in charge of economic researches and SME promotion

3 new Japanese staff joined JETRO Bangkok to strengthen our activities on researches and SMEs.

Mr. Atsusuke KAWADA, replacing Mr. WAKAMATSU, to Vice President and Senior Economist of Overseas Research Department. His main task during his tenure in Bangkok is to conduct research works on East Asian economy.

After graduating from Faculty of Law, Keio University, Japan, Mr. Kawada entered JETRO Head Office in 1988 to be in charge of Asia and Oceania Div., Overseas Research Dept. He has extensive working experience in researches especially in the area of Asia and Oceania apart from his responsibility in Economic Information and Research Division in Singapore from 1993-2005. Prior to joining JETRO Bangkok, he was Director, Overseas Research Dept., JETRO HO

Mr. Masayoshi SHINOMIYA, replacing Mr. AKIYAMA, to work for SME Promotion Dept. Mr. Shinomiya's main responsibility is to support the project of Thailand Automotive Human Resources Development (TAHRDP) and activities of Japanese SMEs in Thailand.

Mr. Shinomiya entered Japan Finance Corporation for Small and Medium Enterprises (JFC) after graduation from Faculty of Arts in Law, Sophia University. During his work at JFC, he provided consultation to SMEs about improvement of finance issues including balanced sheets, cost reduction and also financing support to SMEs. Prior to joining JETRO Bangkok, he worked with Asian Cooperation Div., JETRO Head Office to be involved with "ASEAN Logistics Network Map", expert dispatch service and hearing of Japanese SMEs' concern over overseas presence.

Ms. Yumiko ISHIKAWA, replacing Mr. UETAKE, graduated from Faculty of Letters, Arts and Sciences, Waseda University, Japan. After working at Lehman Brothers Tokyo for a few years, she joined IDE. She has been to Thailand several times as a coordinator of IDE Advanced School (IDEAS). Prior to joining Bangkok Research Center, she was Deputy Director, Information and Publication Division, IDE



2. JETRO holds Kyushu, Japan Food Promotion 2007

- To boast fine food products from Kyushu, a blessed island abundant with agricultural and marine products, a major food supply base in Japan
- Kyushu accounts for 20% of agricultural product yield value in Japan
- Import of Japanese food to Thailand rises 26% and is to increase thanks to more efficient transportation



The Japan External Trade Organization or JETRO Bangkok holds 'Kyushu, Japan Food Promotion 2007', a showcase of food exhibition and cooking demonstration to promote high-quality foods from Kyushu, the southernmost island of Japan where fertility is excellent on February 21.

Mr. Yoichi Kato, JETRO Bangkok President, said in the opening remark " 'Kyushu, Japan Food Promotion 2007' is an activity under 'Japan Food Fair' campaign, a themed event initiated by JETRO Bangkok since 2004. 'Japan Food Fair' serves two purposes: First, to promote exports of Japanese food to Thailand. And second, to introduce authentic Japanese cuisine to Thai people as well as encourage them to discover more gastronomic experiences, by trying new dishes, ingredients, dining culture and cooking recipes."

Mr. Seiji Tazo, Trade Promotion Director, JETRO Bangkok, said "Thailand is ranked 6th among countries with the highest import value of Japanese food. Thailand imports more than 100 items or over 4,000 products of Japanese food, overall value totaling 141,645,000 US Dollars in 2005. Popular items include sashimi grade tuna, sanma fish, miso, hotate-shell, and apple. Major cities that import Japanese food are Bangkok, Samui, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Sri Racha. Thailand's import of Japanese food grew from 112,338,000 US Dollars in 2003 to 141,645,000 US Dollars in 2005, or by 26%. The import trend is expected to rise because high-quality food has been a new health trend in Thailand. Plus, food ordering and transportation are made easier."

Mr. Tazo continued "Kyushu was selected to be the theme of this year since the island boasts a number of fine food and has success story which get the brand image of its quality in some cases. Kyushu is one of the parts of Japan's "food supply center". Kyushu soil is fertile, mainly because it derives from volcanic ashes of Aso-san, the massive volcanic caldera standing in the center of the island. Kyushu sea is abundant with high-quality fishes and marine products. This is why the theme of the Kyushu, Japan Food Promotion 2007 event is entitled 'Blessings the Nature Brings'."

Mr. Tazo said "Kyushu food products that are exhibited today include: fruits, vegetables, fresh fish, dried fish, processed foods such as jelly, kon-nya-ku, and miso, as well as alcoholic drinks. The highlight products of this year are:

STRAWBERRY "Hinoshizuku", so-called 'Raindrop from the Sunshine'

One of the best strawberry types in Japan. Strawberry “Hinoshizuku” has a larger size and is claimed to have the sweetest taste in the world. It symbolizes luck and good cheers due to its red color, and has a positive meaning. It is priced approximately 35-40 Baht apiece.

MELON “Arus”, so-called ‘The King of the Japanese Fruits’

Arus Melon is the most sought-after gift. It is cherished for its beautiful netted skin, permeating fragrance as perfume from musk deer does, and the refreshingly sweet taste. The highest price of Arus melon in Japan is more than 7,000 Baht apiece.

TUNA: Blue Fin Tuna “Kuro Maguro”

Kuro Maguro tastes very uniquely delicious due to the freshness and high fat and oil content. Kuro Maguro is of the biggest size compared to other four tuna species. The full-grown Kuro Maguro is 300 cm. long. Kuro Maguro is transported by air to preserve the freshness and is served fresh and raw as sashimi.

MACKEREL: Horse Mackerel and Japanese Mackerel “Seiki Aji and Seiki Saba”

Seiki Aji and Seiki Saba are very hard to find. Kyushu fishermen capture the fishes one by one using fish hook, from the Bungo Channel, a strait separating Japanese islands of Kyushu

and Shikoku where the current is very strong. The fishes grown there has larger, tighter and more elastic body, therefore are considered the best aji-fish and saba-fish in Japan.

DRIED MACKEREL: Dried “Aji”

Aji fish is captured fresh from the clean sea, and dried using a Japanese-style traditional process to preserve the natural fat and oil content. It is very popular in Japan as a main dish in Japanese food because it has a good taste and contains high health benefits.

KON-NYA-KU “Hontenobe”

Kon-nya-ku is one of the most healthful foods in Japan and in the world. Konnyaku has been regarded as a fiber-rich, non-fat, very low-calorie food for a long time. Kon-nya-ku is now available in various types and forms such as noodles, cube, and jelly, to better serve multiple usage purposes

“Japanese food is delicious and very healthful. It is as much a feast for the eyes as a feast for palate because Japanese food is well-known for the ingredient quality, meticulous arrangements, mental and physical health benefits, and emphasis on seasonality of food,” Mr. Kato concluded.

Kyushu, Japan Food Promotion 2007 was organized out of the concerted cooperation among JETRO Bangkok and JETRO offices in Kyushu region, including Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki and Kagoshima.

Kyushu, Japan Food Promotion 2007 aims to attract 300 interested businessmen from Thailand’s food industry groups, particularly retailers, importers, wholesalers of Japanese food, leading Japanese restaurants and hotels.

The first two “Japan Food Fair” in 2004 and 2005 resulted in over 6,400 business discussions on site and attracted nearly 80,000 visitors to both fairs.



Recent Publications

Magazines:



1. Japan Spotlight, January/February 2007

Publisher's Note	~ Coping with Global Imbalances http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3233
Topics	~ Japan Logs Longest Economic Growth – But People Not Really Feeling Benefits – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3259 ~ Japanese Nuke Plant Makers on Offensive – Global Alliances Reshape Industry into 3 Groups – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3260 ~ Harsh Eyes on Big Tuna Eater Japan – Calls Mount for Role in Curbing Global Haul – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3261
Cover Story	~ RT Revolution to Vault Japan onto Higher Plane -Overview Based on Robot Policy Committee Report- http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3239 ~ Toyota Partner Robots http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3240 ~ Robots As Home Electric Appliances – All-Round Living Support Eyed http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3241 ~ Team OSAKA Sweeps RoboCup 2004-06 – The Track Record – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3242 ~ Rescue Robots: Now & Future – Current State & Problems – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3243 ~ Probing into a Society of Symbiosis with Robots — Reading from Comic Series PLUTO— http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3244 ~ Mentally Soothing Robot Paro – How Developed & How Assisting Therapy – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3245 ~ Robot Evokes Children Interest in Science -UNESCO Program Wows Kids in & outside Japan- http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3246 ~ Robotopia Rising Next Generation of Robots in Japan Brings SF Closer to Fact http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3247
Business Profiles	~ Asia: Center of World Textile Output Interview with Nagashima Toru, President & CEO, Teijin Ltd. http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3249 ~ 9-Man Printer Company Seeks to Impact the World http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3250

Japanese Mind	~ Honoring the Edo Artist http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3251
Viewpoints	~ Japan: A Paradise for Kids in Danger – Make Children Feel Loved to Prevent Bullying – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3252
Feature	~ JapanLDP: Shaping & Adapting to 3 Distinctive Political Systems (Part 3) http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3248 ~ TV Commercials Are Fun http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3256
Asian View	~ History of Thought & Religion in Japan – Part 1: Up to Pre-modern Times – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3253
What's up in Japan	~ Social Networking Service (SNS) in Japan – Likely to Have Bigger Presence Than Blogs – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3254
Finance	~ Japan to Scrap Gray Zone Lending Rates — Law Passed to Toughen Curbs on Moneylenders — http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3255
Keeping up with the Times	~ Social Networking Service (SNS) in Japan – Likely to Have Bigger Presence Than Blogs – http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3254
Gallery	~ Opera Culture in Japan: Is the Recent Boom Genuine? H http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3258
Spotlight	~ New Year Comes with Rice Cakes http://www.jef.or.jp/journal/jef_contents_free.asp?c=3262



2. Japan Spotlight, March/April 2007

Publisher's Note	~ Indulgence in?
Topics	~ Japanese Carmakers Turn Overseas ~ Aid Quality Getting More Important ~ Rebuilding Education, Stress on Patriotism
Cover Story	~ Japan's Fashion Industry: Its Potentials and Policy Initiatives ~ Making Japanese Fashion a World Standard ~ Japanese Fashion Business: Tradition & Innovation ~ Fashion as Cultural Policy ~ Internet Potentials for Fashion Business ~ Tokyo: A Laboratory for New Ideas ~ Is Fashion Still A Status Symbol? ~ Japanese Textiles Support World Fashion Industry
Culture	~ Enjoy Good Food While Dieting
Business Profiles	~ Growth by Business Diversification ~ Tiny Company Stuns the World with Unique Technology

Viewpoint	~ Orderliness in Japanese Society
Asian View	~ History of Thought & Religion in Japan
What's up in Japan	~ Nippon Ham Fighters: The Stars of Hope
Feature	~ Japan's LDP: Shaping and Adapting to Three Distinctive Political Systems: Military Occupation, High Economic Development and Accelerating Globalization
Finance	~ Japan's Budget at 7-Year High
Keeping up with the Times	~ Manic-Depression in Japanese Businessmen
Japanese Mind	~ Invitation to Gagaku
Gallery	~ 1 st Opera Performance in Japan & Its Consequences

products.

Thailand ranked second for production expansion in both the mid to low-end and high-end products categories, despite reductions in almost all functions; the production of mid to low-end products category was down 2.7 points from the 2005 survey figure. Regarding Thailand's political changes in September 2006, the majority of firms doing business/planning to do business in Thailand (430 firms in total) saw "no impact on business plans", while 27.7% reported "few impacts on business plans but will be more cautious in the future". These results suggest that some respondents were slightly affected by the political changes.

For more information, visit
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/news/releases/20070228845-news>

For complete survey, visit
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/news/releases/20070228845-news/Survey1.pdf>



E v e n t s i n J a p a n

1. Automotive Parts and Technology Industry Investment Mission

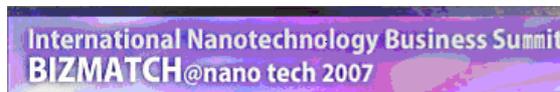
JETRO led a business/investment mission to Hiroshima and Nagoya this February 5th-10th, to provide regional overviews for foreign businesspeople interested in entering Japan's automotive parts and technology markets.

The mission included an industrial tour to Mazda Motor Corporation in Hiroshima, Mitsubishi Motors Corporation in Aichi, a brief presentation and opportunities for one-on-one business talks with local automotive manufacturers and tier 1 suppliers. Seminars on the local investment environment were held in Nagoya and Hiroshima



2. International Nanotechnology Business Summit

BIZMATCH@nano tech 2007



From February 21st to 23rd at Tokyo Big Sight, JETRO, together with Nanotechnology Business Creation Initiative (NBCI) and National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), hosted "International Nanotechnology Business Summit 2007". During the summit, JETRO hosted a business-matching event for Japanese nanotechnology firms interested in partnering with foreign firms.

The business matching event, called "BIZMATCH@nano tech 2007", provided Japanese firms an opportunity to hold one-on-one business talks with selected 15 companies around the world. On February 21st, these companies featured presentations at "seed and need seminar" at nano tech 2007.



3. FOODEX JAPAN 2007: International Food and Beverage Exhibition

JETRO provided a special exhibition zone for some 60 companies from 22 countries at FOODEX JAPAN 2007 (the 32nd International Food and Beverage Exhibition), which will be held from March 13th to the 16th at Makuhari Messe.

FOODEX JAPAN is Asia Pacific's largest annual exhibition for the food and beverage

industries, covering every relevant area of the industry, from agricultural products and processed foodstuffs to soft drinks and alcoholic beverages. This year's event expects roughly 2,400 exhibitors from around the world.

Every year within FOODEX JAPAN, JETRO organizes a special zone devoted to Japan's ODA-recipient countries, to help businesses in these countries enter the Japanese market. Exhibitors in this year's JETRO Zone (61 companies in total)—organized under the theme "BIG PAN"—will display a wide range of food and beverage items, many of them new to the Japan market. Products included: noni juice (mixed with tropical juice for palatability) from Panama; paneer (a type of Indian cheese) from Nepal; caffeine-free, mineral-rich honeybush tea from South Africa as well as quinoa (a staple South American grain) from Bolivia and rosewater from Iran.

The zone also featured live cooking demonstrations at the "JETRO Dining" kitchen by Akira Takahashi, Executive Chef at the Yokohama Royal Park Hotel, who made dishes using unique ingredients presented by BIG PAN exhibitors.



4. Tokyo International Anime Fair 2007

This March 22nd-25th at Tokyo Big Sight the Executive Committee of the fair including JETRO hosted "Tokyo International Anime Fair 2007" (TAF 2007), the world's leading trade fair and exhibition devoted to the animation industry. The event included business matching events, award ceremonies and various shows and entertainment activities.

JETRO held two symposiums within the fair: one examining the French and European anime markets on March 22nd and one on China's content market on March 23rd.



5. Fourth Japan Fashion Week in Tokyo

The Fashion Strategy Forum organized the "4th Japan Fashion Week in TOKYO", (March 12th-20th) at special tents in Nihonbashi and at the Tokyo International Forum and other venues. The event, jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Organization for Small & Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation, as well as JETRO and many others, aimed to increase the international recognition and appeal of Japan's leading design houses

and textile makers.

The week-long event included “Tokyo Collection week” (March 12th-16th), a series of 38 fashion shows by leading Japanese brands and designers at locations across the city, the “JFW Designer’s Exhibition” (March 19th-20th; Nihonbashi North tent), an exhibition showcasing the latest offerings by 11 leading Japanese brands, and also the “Creation Business Forum Textiles Exhibition”, and event aimed at connecting buyers with leading textile designers

and makers.

Japan Fashion Week producers hope the event will be a gateway for young designers to break into the international fashion industry, and to bring together three driving forces in the fashion business: creation, craftsmanship and commercialization. The producer also hopes to make Tokyo a more fashionable and enjoyable city through this event.



Exploring Japan

1) Article of “Fashion as Cultural Policy-The Path to Be a Brand-” by Fukai Akiko, professor at Graduate School Shizuoka University of Art and Culture, released in Japan Spotlight of March/April 2007

Japanese Culture & Fashion

Manga and *anime* have captured the hearts of young people worldwide, and the new PlayStation game console is so popular that the craze has led to incidents of theft. Meanwhile, *sushi* has become ubiquitous, sitting on prominent display in supermarkets in major cities around the world. This global spread of Japanese culture has its beginnings in the 1980s when “Japanese fashion” broke in on the world stage and exerted strong influence.

It was in the 1980s that Japanese fashion, representing Japan and its culture, stormed into Paris, the revered strong hold and control tower of the fashion world where none had dared set foot before. Consequently, in the fashionable streets of Paris, London, New York and Berlin, people welcomed the baggy, blackish clothes. The look was strikingly new compared to the clothes of *Yves Saint Laurent* or *Chanel* that were in line with more ideas of traditional beauty. The clothes of Japanese designers were sold in boutiques with interiors abruptly changed into black, monotone decorations, and people began to judge whether a street was fashionable based on whether it had a boutique selling Japanese designer clothes.

Now we are in 2007 and all that is a memory of a long-ago past. We ought, of course, to remember that the prelude to this phenomenon was the activities of Japanese designers in the 1970s such as Takada Kenzo and Miyake Issey whose works attracted much attention, but the world of fashion changes at a dizzying pace, and everything quickly becomes history. Nonetheless, it is worth recalling that in the 20th century, Japanese fashion with its creative, avantgarde spirit challenged the absolute, unshakable power that Paris wielded as a fashion leader over Europe and the rest of the world. I analyzed this phenomenon more than 10 years ago, but studies on the subject have increased overseas in recent years, and exhibits of Japanese fashion designers such as Kawakubo Rei and Yamamoto Yohji continue to be held at art museums.

1980s: Riveting Power of Japanese Fashion

In the 1970s, Takada used Japanese colors and patterns in a Parisian style, while Miyake attracted attention by incorporating the concept of kimono’s construction, namely the flat “a piece of cloth” (A-POC) look, into his designs.

In the early 1980s, however, Japanese fashion began to assert its riveting power, with clothes by Kawakubo (whose brands is *Comme des Garçons*) and Yamamoto appearing on the Paris runways. The clothes shocked the Paris fashion world. Seen from the European perspective, they were shapeless, asymmetrical and baggy. The clothes were described as looking as if they had been bombed. They were the opposite of European clothes that incorporated graceful silhouettes and colors. The “rag look” or the “crow look” was the term used to describe these avant-garde clothes, which were mostly made of black, gray and other “hueless” fabrics.

Instead of addition decoration, the clothes were stripped of decoration. And instead of beautiful colors, they were without them. The austere, ascetic appearance was perceived as expressing the Japanese concept of *wabi* (taste for the simple but refined) and *sabi* (for the old, quiet), and helped pave the way for the design trend of minimalism that began in the 1980s. Japan was then in the midst of remarkable economic growth, and the country as a whole was in the spotlight. The works of Japanese designers in areas such as architecture and graphics were remarkable, but it was the Japanese fashion above all that had the strongest impact.

Since then, Kawakubo has remained dedicated to “making clothes never seen before,” staying as a source of inspiration for a new generation of designers worldwide. Yamamoto in recent years has collaborated with the international sporting goods label *Adidas* to create a line of sporty street clothes dubbed Y-3. Meanwhile, Miyake has gained acclaim for merging tradition with the newest Japanese technology to make unique, innovative clothes as in his *Pleats Please* and *A-POC* lines. The younger generation of designers such as Watanabe Junya and Takahashi Jun are also coming into their own. Japan has earned high regard for producing new and avant-garde forms that could not have been born in Paris or, indeed, in European culture.

☞☞ “Kawaii”: Fashion Term Borrowed from Japan ☞☞

When it comes to contemporary Japanese culture, the world's interest is in *manga*, *anime* and video games. Naturally, this interest has influenced fashion, with images and characters of *manga* and *anime* such as *Sailor Moon* and *Hello Kitty* affecting the details of clothes. The clothes reflect factors such as mass appeal, childishness, straightforwardness, bad taste and lewdness, and have captured the imagination of people around the world who share the same information. It is easy to surmise that the popularity of brands produced by a new generation of designers such as Takahashi (Undercover) and NIGO in cities such as Paris and New York is connected to the spread of Japanese pop culture. Manga has also made its mark on street fashion, having strongly inspired the unique *Gothloli* (from Gothic and Lolita) genre of clothing worn by the young in Tokyo's trendy areas of Shibuya and Harajuku. Such aspects of Japan have not escaped the attention of John Galliano (*Dior*) and other Paris fashion designers.

The fascination with Japanese pop culture was made still more visible in 2003 when the Paris luxury fashion house *Louis Vuitton* appointed internationally acclaimed Japanese contemporary artist Murakami Takashi to design patterns for its handbags. Murakami uses the so-called “superflat” style, reminiscent of the traditional Japanese method of painting flat areas of colors that so surprised European artists of the 19th century such as Edouard Manet, Claude Monet and Vincent van Goh. It is this flat style, as well as the use of numerous colors favored by the generation raised in the age of liquid crystal displays, and above all, the *manga*-like “*kawaii*” (cute) taste of his work, that has endeared Murakami to fans worldwide. Incidentally, the Japanese *Kojien* dictionary defines *kawaii* as “having youth or childishness or the state of a small thing or person producing a desire in one to treat it or the person with care.”

Led by Japanese fashion in the 1980s, the Japanese aestheticism of *wabi/sabi* spread minimalist trends, and since the turn of the 21st century, the *kawaii* concept and even “*otaku*” (anorak or geek), strongly associated with *manga* and *anime*, have been borrowed into the fashion world.

Combining tradition and a new sense of modernity, Japan's originality has been transformed into designs of universal nature, which have hence been widely accepted by people across the world.

☞☞ Conclusion ☞☞

Today, people worldwide increasingly identify fashion with celebrities (not the kind of celebrities in their traditional sense) whose images are projected in enclosed, almost hobby-like genres in media such as magazines and television and who have been formed into objects of admiration. In such circumstances, it does not appear to be of much significance to hammer out creativity and originality of fashion itself, or of clothes themselves. It is an undeniable fact, though, that for today's young Japanese, the fashion icons are people such as magazine model Ebihara Yuri nicknamed “Ebi-chan” and pop singer Koda Kumi. Given this, the presence of fashion designers is little discernible.

In my view, what we are seeing today is excessively changeable and superficial. I believe – to be more exact, I hope that when this current phase is over, we will see a return to real cultural creativity and fashion will be restored to its natural state. It is only through creative cultural activities that can produce values of universal nature. It follows that creative activities blossom in places that have culture, namely, those places blessed with the right combination of conditions, people and skills.

It is by no means a coincidence that France has so far led the world of fashion. Since the times of Richelieu and Colbert in the 17th century, French leaders have adopted cultural policies with fashion in mind. The French fashion brands that grew into international brands in the latter half of the 20th century not only had many years of experience behind them but also set out to be innovative, continuously exploring new territories. On the other hand, we should take note of the observation by French sociologist Jean Baudrillard in “*Symbolic Exchange and Death*” that in the world of *mode*, various forms die out, but the instant a form is saved as a symbol into a reservoir that transcends time, it is circulated. As he put it, French brands have developed their own archives of fashion content, presenting them at fashion shows in art museums and letting the public see firsthand the cultural appeal of brands. Among such recent moves, Chanel held an exhibition in 2005 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and is planning to hold another in Moscow's Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in September 2007.

As I have already mentioned, the accomplishment of Japanese fashion in creating astounding designs in the 1980s has become nothing more than a page in the history books here in Japan. But outside of Japan, there are moves to reassess the feat of Japanese fashion, as seen in Europe and the

United States (where fashion is perceived as the offspring of cultural activities), Asian countries, and Australia (the latter two searching for hints on direction for their growing fashion industries).

A quarter of a century has passed since Japanese fashion rose to the point of becoming the most useful tool to appeal for Japanese originality. And at long last, Japanese fashion is becoming widely known not among limited fashion circles but by many people across the globe. This illustrates the fact that the passage and accumulation of time is necessary for a brand to firmly establish itself. This is particularly true to fashion brands that are closely linked to a country's culture. Now that we have come this far, it may be time to consider policies to make use of the cultural aspects of fashion – or the reverse side of fashion business.

Fukai Akiko is professor at Graduate School, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture.

2. Highlights of Survey of Business Sentiment on Japanese Corporations in Thailand for autumn of 2006 released by Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok

Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok (JCCB) conducted “**Survey of Business Sentiment on Japanese Corporations in Thailand for autumn of 2006**” on 1,262 JCC member firms (excluding 12 governmental organizations) from 1 November to 1 December 2006, and received the response from 341 (27 percent of the firms).

The survey topics include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Business Sentiment | 2. Sales |
| 3. Net Profit/Loss | 4. Capital Investment (Manufacturing Sector) |
| 5. Problems with Corporate Management | 6. Potential Factors Affecting on the Thai Economy |
| 7. Procurement Destination of Parts/Material (Manufacturing Sector) | 8. Export Trend in 2006 (Manufacturing Sector) |
| 9. Prospective Export Markets in the Future (Manufacturing Sector) | 10. Post Coup Business Operation |
| 11. Influence of the New Airport | 12. Business Development in the East-West Corridor Following Opening of the Second Mekong International Bridge |
| 13. Infringement of Intellectual Property Rights (Counterfeits/Pirated Goods) | |

Highlights of the Survey

1. Business Sentiment

- Current result of DI “25” is the lowest in recent 9-time surveys or 4 and half years.
- Moreover, business sentiment of the second half of 2006 is still lower than the previous period.

(Table 1) Business Sentiment

Unit: percent

	Past Surveys											Survey this time			
	Result										Forecast		Result	Forecast	
	01S	02F	02S	03F	03S	04F	04S	05F	05S	06F	06S	06F	06S	07F	
Improving	45	62	59	59	63	70	64	56	58	48	48	49	41	41	
No change	23	19	26	20	23	17	17	20	18	24	33	27	26	41	
Deteriorating	32	19	15	21	14	13	19	24	24	29	19	24	32	18	
(Ref) DI	13	43	44	38	49	57	45	32	34	19	29	25	9	23	

(Note)

1. DI = “improving” – “deteriorating”
2. If DI is above the neutral level, it signifies that business performance is improving even though the indicator declined from the previous term.
3. Since the fraction of percentage is rounded off, the totaling may not be equal to 100 percent.

2. Capital Investment (Manufacturing Sector)

- The amount of planned capital investment in 2007 will decrease by 26.5 percent from 2006.
- The number of corporations that responded “decrease” (72) exceeds the numbers of corporations that responded “increase” (66).
- It is the first time in 9 years that the corporations responded “decrease” overtook the corporations responded “increase”.

(Table 2) Actual capital investment in 2006 and planned capital investment in 2007 (manufacturing sector)
Unit: million baht and (%)

Industry	2006	2007		No. of firms					Total
	Amount	Amount	Increase %	Increase	No change	Decrease	Undecided		
Food	1,168	343	-70.6	1 (11)	3 (33)	4 (44)	1 (11)	9	
Textile	929	1,026	10.4	3 (23)	4 (31)	3 (23)	3 (23)	13	
Chemical	4,615	5,596	21.3	11 (41)	8 (30)	5 (19)	3 (11)	27	
Steel/Non-ferrous metal	1,729	1,183	-31.6	7 (27)	5 (19)	10 (38)	4 (15)	26	
General machinery	833	442	-47.0	3 (20)	4 (27)	7 (47)	1 (7)	15	
Electric/Electronics machinery	4,389	4,792	9.2	14 (45)	6 (19)	4 (13)	7 (23)	31	
Transportation machinery	50,130	32,783	-34.6	17 (31)	7 (13)	23 (43)	7 (13)	54	
Others	3,580	3,365	-6.0	10 (30)	2 (6)	16 (48)	5 (15)	23	
Manufacturing sector total	67,372	49,529	-26.5	66 (32)	39 (19)	72 (35)	31 (15)	208	

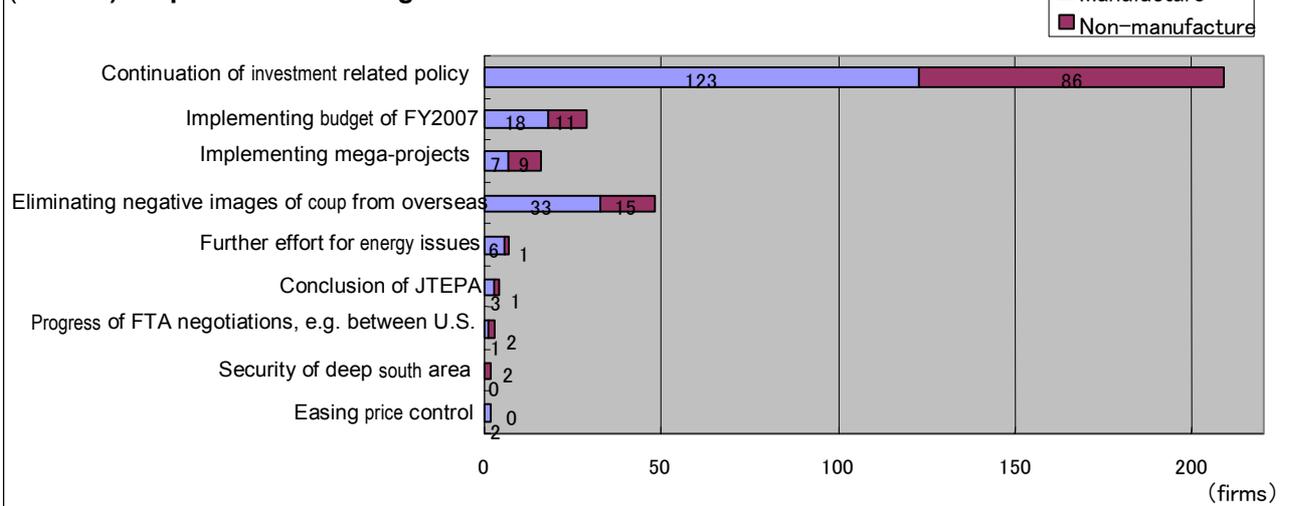
(Note) The figures in the above table show just totaling the data from corporations responding the questionnaire.

The capital-investment amount in the above does not equal to that of the Japanese corporations as a whole.

3. Requests for Current Government (check all that apply)

- 209 corporations, more than 60% of all responded firms, desire “Continuation of investment related policy” to current government.

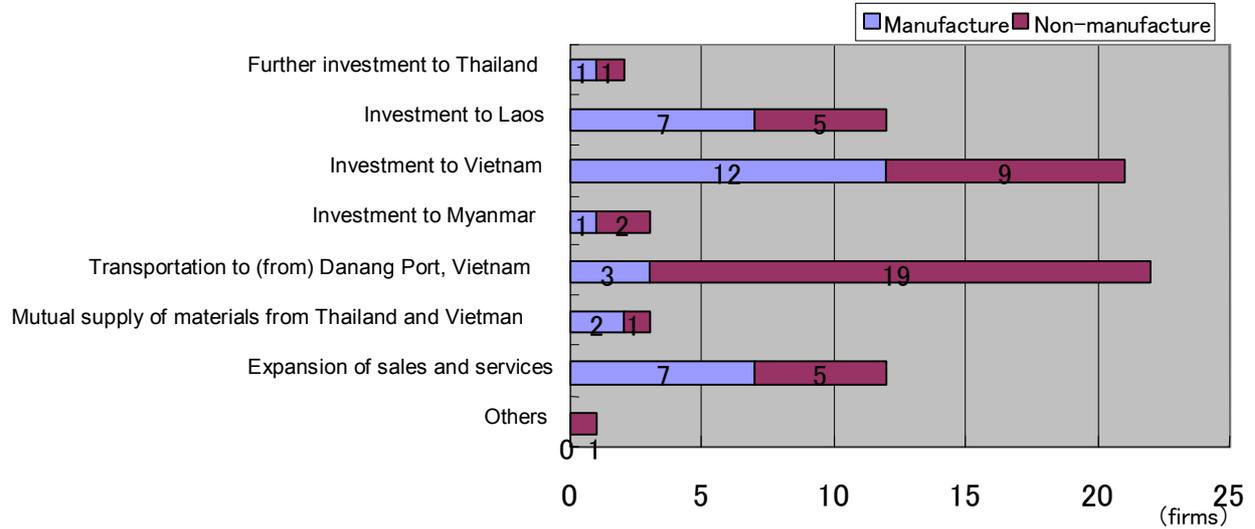
(Chart 1) Requests for current government



[Reference] Business Plans Utilizing East-West Economic Corridor

- There are 21 corporations which will consider “Investment to Vietnam” by opening of East-West Economic Corridor

(Chart 2) Concrete business plans utilizing East-West Economic



For the full survey in English, visit http://www.jetro.go.jp/thailand/e/data/jccaut06_eng.pdf
 For the full survey in Thai, visit http://www.jetro.go.jp/thailand/e/data/jccaut06_tha.pdf

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