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MSC CAMERA COMMITTEE FALL PHOTO CONTEST

- Entry pick-up tables in MSC on Nov. 6, 7, and 8, 1978
- (no entries taken after 3:00 p.m. Nov. 8)
- Formal Judging Nov. 11, 1978
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Japanese markets await imports

More sales if U.S. alters products

United Press International
NEW YORK — American companies can sell far more in Japan by adapting their products to Japanese tastes and their standard of weights and measures, according to Japanese businessmen.

"For instance," Yohei Mimura, president of Mitsubishi International Corp., said in an interview, "large-model refrigerators, which Seibu Department Store had bought from Sears Roebuck and Co., were sold well in the Japanese market this summer. The reason is very simple. Sears adjusted the refrigerators' door shelves to the size of Japanese beer bottles, which are about two times larger than Americans'."

Mitsuru Ohki, manager of Sony Corporation of America's public relations, said if American automakers were to export small-sized, right hand-drive cars to Japan, they would enjoy a large sale. "But they don't do so and try to sell without adapting their cars to Japanese so-

cial environment," he said.

Many American businessmen complain that Japan's distribution system is so complex and difficult that it is practically impossible to market their products. "The Japanese distribution system is certainly complex, but it doesn't inherently discriminate against imports," Mimura said. "It is difficult for everyone, including Japanese manufacturers."

Then how can American firms overcome the Japanese distribution system to reach a vast, affluent market of 115 million consumers?

"There are several avenues open to American companies to go into the Japanese market," said Masao Okamoto, director of Nomura Research Institute. He told a recent meeting of U.S. and Japanese businessmen in Baltimore that a partial list of possible approaches includes the large general trading companies, retail outlets like supermarkets, department stores and self-service chains, and manufacturers of parts and replacements. "An alternative to establishing one's own distribution network is to utilize the marketing network of a Japanese manufacturer of similar goods," he said.

"For example, General Foods had only a 5 to 10 percent share of the Japanese market" when it used its own distribution system. But he said it was able to boost its market share to 20 to 25 percent by tying up with Ajinomoto Co., a Japanese seasoning manufacturer.

An even more spectacular expansion of market share was attained by Warner-Lambert with Hattori Tokeiten, a manufacturer of "Seiko" watches. "Through Hattori's distribution system," Okamoto said, "Warner-Lambert was able to increase its share of the \$40 million safety razor and blade market to 65 percent, outstripping both Gillette and the once dominant domestic 'Feather' brand."

Those foreign firms all made a determined effort to understand the Japanese market, decided to dig in for the long haul, and waited patiently to realize a return, he said. The problem is, however, that such strategy goes against the grain of American management.

"American companies are often too eager to show early returns to satisfy their investors," said Hideo Suzuki, president of Kanematsu-Gosho (U.S.A.) Inc. "The giant American firms like IBM and GE

have adapted their marketing strategies to Japanese realities, but small companies are reluctant exporters by and large because there is a vast domestic market."

Last year, the United States became for the first time a big net importer of goods. It suffered a record trade deficit of \$26.7 billion, of which \$8.1 billion came in trade with Japan. Obviously, the United States cannot afford to continue with so large a deficit with Japan. As Commerce Secretary Juanita M. Kreps has put it, "If we do not try harder to sell to Japan, we really cannot blame Japan for not buying from us."

The dollar's decline against the Japanese yen has made American products more competitive in the Japanese market. "So, now is best time for American companies to tap the Japanese market," Sadami (Chris) Wada, Sony assistant vice president, said.

Sony, generally regarded as a major exporter from Japan to the United States, is also active in importing U.S. consumer goods to Japan, he said. Last year, it imported American goods worth \$50 million to Japan. They included Whirlpool refrigerators, Hoover vacuum cleaners, Norwich T-shirts and Cosco bathroom accessories.

"American manufacturers, espe-

cially small ones, show little interest in selling their goods in Japan," Wada said. "Many potential exporters, I believe, destroy the opportunities open to them." Pointing to both the U.S. and Japanese governments are now more eager than ever to help U.S. companies export to Japan, he said they can make the most of this opportunity by taking basic steps to market in foreign countries. Those basics are to pay special attention to packaging, print their instructions in Japanese to adapt the design and colors of their products to Japanese preferences and to give extra attention to timing of samples and quotations and to timing of delivery, he said.

"The Japanese market is very affluent, but very discriminating," Wada said. "It's not a market where Americans can dump their surplus but a market where their best products will compete with the rest of the world's best products."

A 100-member U.S. export development mission visited Japan this fall to promote sales of American products and conduct market research. It was a follow-up to a 92-member Japanese import promotion mission, which toured the country to seek out American products that could be exported to Japan. The mission purchased goods worth \$1.94 billion.

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Chinese visitors study gasification

United Press International
SARATOGA, Wyo. — Through a veil of cigarette smoke, 19 of China's top experts on coal — all but one wearing gray, Western-style suits — sat and listened attentively to a presentation on American experiments in gasifying coal beneath the ground.

The delegation represented one facet of China's outreach to the Western world under the post-Mao Tse-tung leadership's drive to quickly make China a "modern" nation. The trip also was an indication of a departure for a country which under Mao and particularly during the Cultural Revolution, stressed the necessity of ideological purity or "redness" over expertise.

The Chinese, all members of the China Coal Society, puffed on cigarettes, took notes and asked questions as they watched slides and heard through an interpreter from Charles F. Brandenburg, an assistant director of a federal research center involved in underground gasification.

Brandenburg told the group about the process, by which coal too deep to mine is burned underground to form gas for heating. He also told of the limitations: the gas generally has one-seventh to one-tenth the heating value of natural gas, the process cannot be used on coal found in the eastern United States, and thick seams of sub-bituminous coal are necessary.

The Chinese showed particular interest in estimates showing the process might produce commercially salable gas.

Li Chih-yuan, the general secretary of the delegation and a director of the coal society, said in an interview after the lecture that his country's goal is to double coal production during the next 10 years. Whether underground gasification will play a role in development remains to be seen, Li and other members of the delegation said. The experts will return to China and study the U.S. technology, they said.

The Chinese arrived in Washington, D.C., Sept. 13 to began a tour

of American coal mines and research facilities.

Like the United States, China has vast coal reserves. But, China has much of the coal in near cities and fertile agricultural areas, making access for mining difficult.

Underground gasification experiments were conducted in China but "they were stopped," Chia said. Although most coal mining in China now is done underground because reserves generally are deep, he said, China wants to develop strip mining, used extensively in the American West where coal is relatively near the surface.

After the one-hour presentation in Saratoga, the delegates boarded their charter bus and rode to the site of the gasification experiments. Hanna, Wyo., some 40 miles north through desolate stretches of rangeland.

During the tour of the Hanna facility — one of three underground gasification sites in the country — the delegates seemed particularly interested in the measuring instruments and computers used in the experiments, Brandenburg said.

At one point on the tour, Chia questioned Brandenburg whether the world leader in underground gasification was the United States or the Soviet Union, China's arrival. Brandenburg said the Soviets probably were ahead because they have been gasifying coal underground for 40 years.

"We've heard rumors that the Soviets are declining their activity but they are unconfirmed," Brandenburg said. "We do know they put first things first — they take their product gas and use it to distill vodka."

That comment was greeted with a roar of laughter from Chia and other delegates within earshot.

U.S. officials say underground gasification provides access to deeply buried coal, and may become commercially feasible in the later parts of this century. However, the Americans say it may have severe effects on underground supplies.

Other than to say China was studying the issue, Chia and other interviewed did not speculate on the applicability of underground gasification to China. Chia did say China was concerned with environmental effects of the process.

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