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Promoting Traditional Craft Industries by Encorporating Tourism: The Cases of Arita and Kyoto

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1 Aim and back ground of this paper

Traditional craft industries have existed until now as suppliers of consumer goods for Japanese people for centuries. They are the face of Japanese industry and also can be seen as representatives of the culture of Japanese manufacturing. During the 37th Tokyo Motor Show, Nissan Motors presented "*Jikoo*", a new concept car which adopted various Japanese traditional crafts such as *inden, japan and Edo karakami*[1]. When Japanese firms compete in the global market, it is becoming increasing important for them to have national and regional identities. As Nissan did, traditional craft items can be adopted as symbols of national and regional identities. It can be argued that traditional craft industries are not only valuable for their own sake, but also for Japanese industries as a whole.

However, such valuable traditional craft industries are declining rapidly. After the Second World War, a system of mass-production and mass-consumption was established and Japanese life style has changed dramatically from traditional Japanese to western and as a result, the demand for traditional craft products declined. As a response, in 1974 the central government enacted the Law Concerning the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries (hereafter LPTCI) and began to promote traditional craft industries. However, even with the support of the government, the decline of these industries remains.

This paper examines how traditional craft industries are dealing with their decline, and discusses the measures to revive them. The outline of this paper is as follows. Section 2 clarifies the definition of traditional craft industries and profiles their recent trends. Section 3 reviews the existing arguments on traditional craft industries, and identifies the major attempts to promote the industries. Section 4 directly examines the cases of Arita and Kyoto. Finally, section 5 summarises and extracts lessons from the cases.

2 The Profile of Traditional Craft Industries

2.1 What is a traditional craft industry?

Traditional crafts are diverse. Accord-

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ing to the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, more than 1200 items were identified as traditional crafts all over Japan (2003 March). The Japanese government does not support all traditional craft industries, but limits the support to the designated industries based on the LPTCI. The criteria of traditional craft is outlined below.

A The article must be used mainly in everyday life.
B The article must be primarily manufactured by hand.
C The article must be manufactured using traditional techniques.
D The materials should be mainly those which have been traditionally employed.
E The industry must be of a regional nature.

Data source: home page of the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries. http://www.kougei.or.jp/english/promotion.html

The term "traditional" mentioned in criteria C and D refers to practices that go back "more than one hundred years". Also, regarding criteria E, the industry must be of a certain scale which is either 10 firms or more, or 30 workers or more.

This paper adopts the criteria which LPTCI uses because the definition of LPTCI is widely known and also well accepted among academics.

2.2 Trends of traditional craft industries

It is very difficult to obtain precise statistical data of traditional craft industries. There does exist a survey, the *Zenkoku dentō teki kōgeihin sōran* (*The Survey of Traditional Crafts in Japan*), but it is unsuitable for examining the precise trends of the industries because its data lacks consistency in the definition of firm under investigation. Having admitted such a problem, this paper uses *Zenkoku dentō teki kōgeihin sōran* because no other better data is available. The data should be understood for understanding general trends of the industries. As can be seen in Table 1, output and the

Table 1 Trends of traditional craft industries

	peak[1]	1989	1994	1999	2001[2]
Output value (thousand million yen)	540(1983)	494	423	261	654
Number of firms	34,043(1979)	27,196	23,117	17,591	18,326
Number of employees (thousand)	290(1979)	224	153	102	112

Data Source: Dentō teki kōgeihin sangyō shinkō kyōkai (2003) *Dentō teki kōgeihin no hon 2003*, Tokyo, Dōyūkan
Note 1: "Peak": the highest figures since the enactment of the Law for Promotion of the Traditional Craft in 1974.
Note 2: Data until 1999 was the data of the traditional craft industry. However, data of 2001 includes products that do not meet the criteria for designation.

number of firms declined by half and the number of employees declined to one third in the last twenty years. The decline accelerated in the 1990s in particular. Even in the 1980s during the Japanese economy's affluence, traditional craft industries were declining. Furthermore, in the 1990s when the Japanese economy as a whole fell into recession, the conditions of traditional craft industries became even worse.

3 The Existing Arguments on the Problems of Traditional Craft Industries

This section reviews existing arguments on the problems of traditional craft industries and proposed ideas to solve them. *The 21seiki no nihon no dentō teki kōgeihin sangyō shisakuno arikata aratana seikatsu bunka sōzō ni mukete: Tōshin-an* (*hereafter Tōshin-an*) contains the major arguments on traditional craft industries, thus this section reviews *Tōshin-an* as a basis of discussion[2]. *Tōshin-an* is a report that the *Dentōteki kōgeihin sangyō shingikai* produced when LPTCI was altered in 2001[3]. *Tōshin-an* pointed out the following factors as the causes of the decline of traditional craft industries.

External Factors (EF)

EF1: The change of Japanese life style and environment.

Urbanisation has reduced the size of houses and gardens of Japanese people. Clothing, food and housing became westernised and alternative products took the place of traditional ones. As a result, traditional crafts lost space and opportunity to be used. Furthermore, nuclearisation of the family unit has reduced the likelihood that traditional customs are passed to a new generation.

EF2: The change of Japanese people's view toward daily commodities.

Japanese people's idea toward daily commodities changed and started to use cheap disposable products. As a result, interest in expensive traditional handcrafts has declined.

EF3: Supply of inexpensive, high quality daily commodities by mass production.

Living necessities, with the exception of traditional crafts, have improved in quality, design, usage, sales method and so on, and they are supplied at low prices in large quantity. In contrast, traditional crafts are relatively expensive and not easy to care for.

EF4: Influx of imports

Imitations and substitutes of traditional crafts are imported cheaply from Asian countries. Meanwhile, appreciation of the yen vis-a-vis the dollar made it possible for Japan to import luxurious products from the US and Europe at more affordable prices than before.

Internal Factors (IF)

IF1: Sluggishness in developing products that meet consumer needs.

Traditional craft producers do not develop products that meet consumer needs because producers do not understand consumer needs.

IF2: Struggle to develop new sales channels.

As department stores and specialist stores reduced their stocks of traditional crafts, wholesalers in market regions and other merchants in the existing sales channels have lost their roles. Information networks have developed, and a fast, low cost distribution system has been established within the Japanese economy as a whole. In such a circumstance, the traditional craft industry has been unable to catch up with the trends and still suffers from large distribution costs.

IF3: Lack of publicity.

Except for some well established names, traditional crafts are known only to limited people. The appeal and value of hand-made traditional crafts and the ways to use them are not well informed to consumers.

Aside from these internal and external factors, *Tōshin-an* also pointed out management difficulty, shortage of successors, shortage of resources and difficulty of availability of traditional tools and materials for production of traditional crafts as problems.

This section discusses the factors listed above which were pointed out in *Tōshin-an*. Firstly, it has to be noted that external factors are difficult to solve by the industry itself because they are out of the hands of the industry. However, EF1 and EF2 are not new issues, and it could be said that these trends are actually fading out. *Tōshin-an* points out that Japanese people have begun to return to Japanese tastes in spite of the globalization. It is unrealistic to think that Japanese life style would regress to the past, though it is very possible that the demand for goods with traditional Japanese tastes continues, if manufacturers make products that meet the current and subsequent generation's life style, thus creating a new market. The question is whether producers can produce what consumers want. As is suggested in internal factor IF1.Some traditional crafts such as Buddhist shrines and ink stones may be difficult to incorporate into the modern life style, nevertheless, most traditional crafts seem to have a potential to be adapt. For instance, *yukata* (an informal cotton kimono) is in fashion now, but many modern *yukata* are supplied by Western clothing producers and stores. The problem is that people in the traditional Japanese clothing industries lack new ideas and are unable to develop clothing that fits the modern life style. As Yamazaki (1980) pointed out more than two decades ago, it is important for the industry to adjust to the environment and age. Concerning EF2, it is hard to imagine that disposable products become more popular than now in Japan because consumers interest in ecology is growing. On that it is unreasonable to think that the rise of the ecological ethics alone will change consumer behaviour, yet, traditional craft producers can target consumers who are conscious of ecology. As for EF3, it can hardly be said that the age of mass production and mass consumption ended. At the same time, it is obvious that producers today are required to produce high quality products that match consumers' specific demand. Traditional craft producers adopt hands in production and thus they should be able to adjust their products to consumers requests with less difficulty than mass producers. Even with such an advantage of production method, traditional craft producers are unable to satisfy consumers. This is because they have a poor understanding of consumers' demand, which in turn is due to a shortage of the information about consumers' needs. The improvement of mass produced products in quality, design, usage, and sales method should not be a problem for traditional craft industries. Traditional craft industries should improve by themselves. The problem of traditional craft industries is the fact that they change too little and thus there is too little improvement. This can be regarded as the same problem as IF1 and IF2. Concerning EF4, it could be seen as a problem that is most likely to advance in the future among the four external factors. The influence of imports cannot be avoided in the global economy, especially, imports from Asian countries that are too price-competitive making it extremely difficult for Japanese producers to compete with them. However, traditional craft industries can reduce the influence of such imports by not competing in price, but by competing in quality, design, services, etc.. Rivalry for traditional craft industries may be producers in the US and Europe. Products from the US and Europe became affordable for Japanese consumers because of the appreciation of the yen. The decline of prices of products from the US and Europe was relative to the past, and the reduced prices of these products are unlikely to drop dramatically any more in the near future. It is also unlikely that the trend that Japanese consumers favour American and European products is reinforced. The traditional craft industry should develop products that can compete with American and European products. This comes back to the question of whether traditional craft producers can understand consumer needs and develop products that meet them. This is the factor that shares the same basis as IF1 and IF3.

Thus, external factors for the decline of traditional craft industries can be linked with internal factors. IF1: "Sluggishness in developing products that meet consumer needs" can be attributed to producers' incapability to develop products, but moreover to their underdeveloped channels of information. The traditional information channel for traditional craft producers was wholesalers, who are in the decline today, as is pointed out in IF2. Not only acquiring information, but also providing it is another problem for traditional craft industries, and that is pointed out as IF3. It could be argued that these internal factors for the decline of the traditional craft industry originates from the failure of the traditional business channels of the industry: "producer → local wholesaler → metropolitan wholesaler → retail stores → consumer". Most producers do not have enough opportunities to make themselves appealing to consumers, and they also do not have enough chance to understand consumers, either and thus they are unable to develop attractive products. Total cost reduction, as well as distribution, has not been achieved sufficiently. Such a poor link between producers and wholesalers has been pointed out by many researchers — for instance, Itakura (1981) and Ishikura (1989). The problem is not limited to traditional craft industries, but for the majority of traditional industrial clusters all over Japan. A large proportion of producers in the majority of industrial clusters have relied on local wholesalers in sales and product development. The local wholesalers have played a leading role in the clusters, and thus they have often enjoyed a superior position in their relationship with producers. Having been used to such an environment producers of late have not yet been able to carve out a new sales route without reducing reliance on wholesalers.

Tōshin-an pointed out management difficulty and a shortage of artisans who have inherited traditional skills as the problems. These are indeed crucial matters because it is ultimately human resources that can solve all the problems examined earlier. These problems are related to low wages and poor working conditions which have long been recognised as a vital problem. It is important to provide good wages and good working conditions in order to recruit quality human talent. Low wage and poor working conditions were regarded the crucial problems not only for traditional craft industries, which consist of small and medium scale firms, but also for all small and medium scale firms in general. For example, Keizai kikakuchō[4] (1947) viewed that the Japanese economy had a dual structure — large firms with good wages and working conditions, and small and medium scale firms with low wages and poor working conditions coexisted. After the rapid economic growth of the 1950s and the 1960s, the low wages and poor working conditions of small and medium scale firms became less an important socio-economic problem because small and medium scale firms improved them. Nevertheless, it should be noted that even in the 1980s, Ishikura (1989) pointed out that cheap labour was an essential factor condition for the Buddhist altar industries in Akita and Kagoshima. Despite these arguments, it should be noted that the image of crafts people and the industry is improving, which was pointed out in Tōshin-an.

The following sections review literature which report how traditional craft industries have been struggling with their decline in recent years. Seki (1998) investigated Tsubame (Niigata prefecture), a district known for copperware production, and found that the district was changing to a metal processing complex and a metal and new material products cluster. Seki identified that some firms got out of traditional metal tableware and houseware production, and hewed new markets by developing new items such as road mirrors and golf clubs. Also, there were firms that changed materials that they processed from stainless to titanium or shape memory plastic. The Tsubame cluster as a whole shifted from Japanese nails to Copperware, and then to Western silverware and stainless houseware, time to time. However, Seki argued that the whole cluster should not go the same direction as it did in the past, but individual firms should carve out its own way with its own competitive advantage today, and the cluster as a whole should be diverse.

Araki (2001) worked on the dyeing industries of Kyoto and Arimatsu/Narumi. According to Araki, the Kyoto dyeing industry adopted computers and attempted to build a network among firms in order to share information, however, the attempt failed. It attempted to share the information about trends in customer demand, but wholesalers found it too insecure to share such information because it was seen as disclosing their trade secrets. In addition, Araki explained that quick response was not vital for the traditional Japanese clothing business. Business customs like consignment sale which did not appear among network data was also seen as a reason for the failure. Besides the attempt to build a network, Araki reported that the success of Aritamtsu town which is known for the traditional dyeing industry in attracting tourists. He explained that a large effort and leadership of Takeda Shōten, a leading local dyeing firm, was crucial to the success of Arimatsu as a tourist locale. Another important point that Araki made in his work in 1992 was that Takeda Shōten was on the way to shift its business from Japanese clothing to Western clothing by supplying its dyed cloth to well known Western clothing designers. However, during the course of this paper's drafting, research on this matter in 2005 found out that Takeda Shōten's major business was still in Japanese clothing. While Takeda Shōten is still a challenging and leading firm in the industry, it must be noted that shifting business from Japanese clothing to Western clothing is not a simple task. When traditional Japanese craft producers embark on something new, academics and mass media tend to report it with overexpectation, yet, care must be also taken in reporting it in order to avoid misunderstanding.

Jibasangyō no henyō to sokoni ikiru chūshō kigyō no taiō, a report of Chūshō kigyō kinyū kōko (2003), reported the latest efforts that the traditional craft industries such as the Takaoka copperware industry (Toyama prefecture) and the Tsuboya ceramicware industry (Okinawa prefecture) were making in order to stimulate their business. According to the report, wholesalers in general were in decline, however, those who were able to plan to make new products and selected appropriate producers and develop the products were surviving. Also, producers who got out of producing traditional items such as vasa and tea bowls, and started to produce new items such as interior lighting accessories and tableware were identified. Such producers hold exhibitions in Tokyo. Although they bypassed local wholesalers, they were not treated hostile by local wholesalers because their newly developed products were different from the existing items, and thus they were not seen as competition to wholesalers. It was also reported that some Tsuboyaware producers hold pottery making classes. While the pottery making classes themselves did not increase sales directly, they nevertheless helped producers to expose their names to consumers, and also artisans who taught in the class improved their skills through their teaching experience.

Tōhoku sangyō kasseika centre (2004) reported the up-to-date conditions and challenges of the nine traditional industries. For example, the Kawatsura lacquerware industry displayed their products in an exhibition in Milan in 2000 and started to trade internationally beginning in 2001. As for the Wajima lacquerware industry, Wajima city in 2003 built a terrace for artisans in a traditional architectural style, where visitors can see artisans' work as well as have audiences with them. It was also reported that "digital archives", that record designs of traditional crafts as computer data, was carried out in the Wajima lacquerware and the Nishijin textile industries. Besides these challenges, it was reported that Iwate ken san (Products of Iwate prefecture Corporation) built their own "antenna shops"[5] in Fukuoka and Tokyo.

4 The Cases

This section examines the cases of the Aritaware industry and the traditional craft industries in general of Kyoto that are striving to promote the industries by tourism. The Aritaware industry is the largest in terms of the scale of handmade production[6], while Kyoto is where the largest concentration of traditional craft industry is located. There are seventeen designated and fifty-four non-designated traditional craft items in Kyoto prefecture. The research is based on semi-structured and unstructured interviews with producers, wholesalers, managers of trade associations, administrative staff of schools, etc in the Arita ceramicware industry (Saga prefecture) and various industries of Kyoto (Kyoto prefecture). Each interview was carried out for one to two hours.

4.1 The Arita Ceramicware industry

As can be seen in Table 2, the Arita ceramicware industry kept growing until 1990, which was unique within the traditional craft industry as a whole, which had a peak around 1980. Even within the ceramic industry in Japan, the ceramic industry of Gifu/Aichi had a peak earlier, and thus it could be said that the Arita-ceramicware industry's growth persisted. The ceramic industry of Aichi/Gifu was hit by the appreciation of yen because it mainly produced Western tableware and ornamental ware for overseas markets. In contrast, the Artia ceramicware industry' enjoyed an advantageous environment. The market of Aritaware was domestic, and "Arita-ware", which maintained a prestigious image based on its history, was competitive in the economic boom from the late 1980s until the beginning of the 1990s. However, as can be clearly seen in Table 2, Aritaware which lack of price competitiveness resulted in low sales during the major serious recession of the 1990s.

Table **2** Trends of tableware production output, the number of firms and employees in Arita town

	1970	1980	1990	2000
Output(million yen)	2,170	10,790	15,200	8,170
Number of firms	59	111	126	98
Number of employees	2,605	2,309	2,112	1,105

Data source: *Arita chō chōsei yōran* (The handbook of Arita town)

Arita ceramicware is produced in Saga prefecture with Arita town as the core. The origins of Arita-ware can be traced to the 17th century. Many Korean people were brought to Japan after Japan's invasion of Korea in 1592-1597. It is believed that in the early 17th century Korean potters discovered porcelainstone at Izumiyama in Arita, and succeeded in producing porcelainware in Japan for the first time. The porcelainware industry developed under the protection and supervision of the Nabeshima family, a local *daimyo*, from that time until the end of the Edo period (1603-1867). Domainal sponsorship shaped the development of porcelainware as the most important commercial and high-status ceramicware. This porcelainware was shipped from Imari port during the Edo period, and subsequently, porcelainware made in the Saga/Nagasaki region came to be known as Imari-ware. Originally, Imari-ware was underglazed blue and milk-white, but this changed to the production of colourful enamelled porcelainware from the 1640s. Sakaida Kakiemon, who succeeded in perfecting an enamel overglaze, as well as the Dutch East India Company which placed enormous orders and provided explicit colourful models of styles which were favoured by Europeans, contributed to that major change in Imari-ware (Kodansha Encyclopaedia of Japan, 1983). European countries could not produce quality hard porcelainware until the early-18th century (Manchester City Art Galleries, 1986). The Dutch East India Company used to purchase porcelainware from China, but in the 1640s, trade with China became very difficult because of China's civil war, which reduced the production of porcelainware and also led to the closure of its south coast. As a result, Japan became the alternative supplier of porcelainware for the Dutch East India Company. The combination of domestic problems of China and Japanese success in producing colour painted porcelainware led to the growth of production of Imari-ware. Although the Tokugawa government banned international trade from 1639 to 1858, an exception was made for Nagasaki, which the Nabeshima family governed. Hence, Imari-ware had an exceptional advantage in access to the export market. The export of Imari-ware flourished from the mid-17th century untill the early 18th century. The transport of Imari-ware changed from ship to train in the Meiji period. Kyushu Railways started operating their service between Moji and Haiki in 1897, and the Imari line which joined Arita and Imari started operating in 1898. This changed the trade centre of porcelainware from Imari to Arita. As a result, porcelainware made in the Saga/Nagasaki region became widely known as Arita-ware from then until now. Hotels and restaurants as well as ordinary consumers are important for the ceramic tableware industry. Traditionally, Arita-ware is very commonly used in the catering business. Porcelain tableware is more suitable for the catering business than coarse ceramic tableware. The former is more durable and looks better than the latter, and durability and good appearance are important in the catering business. Hence, the Arita-ware industry has an advantage in the catering business market compared to other ceramic tableware industries. In addition to the nature of Arita-ware, the special distribution channels make Arita-ware particularly competitive in the catering business market. There are "*chokubai shōnin*", Aritaware merchants who visit Japanese style hotels and restaurants and sell Arita-ware.

Thus, local merchants were important for the growth of the Arita-ware industry. However, a lack of communication between producers and consumers, the largest problem of the traditional craft industry, is also a serious problem for the Arita ceramicware industry. Arita is a town of producers and wholesalers, but is not a town of retailing because merchants went out of the town and sold tableware in the consumption regions. Today, it is increasingly important for producers to obtain detailed information on consumers in order to develop products that meet consumer needs, and also it is important to attract consumers appeal. Thus, it is vital for the Aritaware industry to attract consumers to the town to in order to create opportunities to communicate with them.

The most common distribution channel of tableware for ordinary consumers is: "producer → local merchant → metropolitan merchant → retail store → consumers." As a result, Arita-ware producers hardly have had a chance to make contact with consumers due to this distribution system. The exception is the Arita Pottery Fair. The fair is held once a year for a week between the end of April and the beginning of May and attracts about one million tourists to a small town of only thirteen thousand. Although it is good to be able to attract such a large number of tourists, people in the Arita-ware business become too busy to make close and prolonged communication with consumers during the fair. Furthermore, a large number of merchants from other regions open temporary stalls during the festival — such outsiders are known to dominate half of the participant shops in the fair. Thus, it could be argued that the fair is not the right place and time to attract Arita-ware consumers. It could even be said that the fair creates misunderstanding between Aritaware producers and consumers. Except for the fair period, Arita is after all not a tourist town, and so people in the Arita-ware industry rarely have a chance to communicate with consumers.

The attempt to attract tourists

As a countermeasure to the decline of the industry, Arita town is currently trying to attract tourists throughout the year. As was referred in the previous section, there are few tourists in Arita town, and people in the Arita-ware industry are not used to hosting visitors. For example, some wholesalers use plastic cases originally used for transporting pottery to display their products in their shops which also act as their retail spaces. Although their main business is wholesale, attention is needed to improve the sales atmosphere if they want to attract tourists. There are still quite a few shops with so few staff that it is hardly noticed even if a customer enters the shop. People in the industry are currently trying to change such attitudes.

There is a group of people who hold "*Benjara matsuri jikkō iinkai* (Benjara festival committee)", a meeting to discuss building an attractive ceramic tourist town. In 1996, "The World Ceramics Exposition in Saga '96" was held in Arita. Hosting the exposition brought a sense of unity for people in Arita town. When the exhibition ended, people in Arita thought it was important to maintain such a sense of unity, and they started to hold a Benjara matsuri committee, a voluntary meeting that is held monthly. Benjara matsuri itself is a small pottery festival in Autumn, but the committee plans various events throughout the year. The traditional Arita ceramic fair is a giant commercial event to sell solely pottery, meanwhile the events that Benjara matsuri committee holds are not necessarily commercial events to sell pottery, but events that include music, cooking, etc. The focus of the committee is to welcome visitors to Arita. The committee does not receive subsidies, and thus its activities are based on low cost and sustainability. As part of the transition to becoming a tourist town, the committee prepared fifty rental bicycles for visitors because Arita's public transport system is very poor. The committee consists of diverse members such as pottery manufacturers, pottery wholesalers, town hall staff, chamber of industry and commerce staff, curators, restaurant owners, journalists, etc. The activities are supported by voluntary participants.

Although the challenge of Arita as a whole seems to be sustainable, there is problem on the rise. As the activity becomes vigorous, each participant's duty increases because the activity and events depend on pa rticipants' voluntary work. It is essential to increase the number of participants and get support from more people in order to avoid overworking of existing members. It could be argued that it is crucial to the make activity enjoyable for participants for attracting new members.

4.2 The case of the traditional craft industries in general in Kyoto

Kyoto is the place where the largest number of traditional craft industries are located and it could be seen as the most advanced place in joining traditional craft industry and tourism together. One of the important and challenging examples is "Dentō kōgei taiken kōbō (Making Your Own Item at the Traditional Craft Workshop)" (hereafter Taiken Kōbō). Taiken Kōbō is managed by "Kyo no dentō sangyō" Taiken kankō suishin iinkai (The Committee of Promoting Traditional Craft in Kyoto by Hands-on Learning Experience) which consists of fourteen trade associations of the designated traditional craft industries. Kyoto Prefecture proposed the plan to trade associations of traditional craft industries and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. One hundred and three workshops are registered as members in February 2005. Visitors to Kyoto wanting to experience traditional craft making can book a workshop from among the registered members. Hands-on learning experience of Taiken Kōbō can be booked either on the internet or Kyoto Dentō Kōgei kan which is a building that displays and sells traditional crafts of Kyoto.

One may expect immediate commercial success by attracting tourists to the traditional craft industries. However, Kyoto's Taiken Kōbō does not expect such direct economic effect, but is concerned with public relations, instead. There are traditional industrial districts that built specific facilities for hands-on learning experience for visitors. In comparison, Kyoto's Taiken Kōbō shows workshops themselves where production is actually carried out, and thus visitors can feel a genuine atmosphere of traditional craft workshops. In other districts, merchants tend to be involve in hands-on learning experience programme, meanwhile in Taiken Kōbō, producers are primarily active in the system. The Taiken Kōbō system expects visitors to see how producers are working on traditional crafts and does not expect instant sales growth because of their visitors. By establishing good communication with consumers, producers anticipate results from a long term viewpoint.

Opening their doors to consumers is important for the traditional craft industries because they have been closed for a long time. It has been difficult for small workshops to have consumers visit directly because they are not known to consumers and cannot invest in advertising. Taiken Kōbō has made it possible for them to communicate with consumers for a small registration charge.

Basically, that is to say that the workshops of Taiken Kōbō are registered in the system voluntarily.

5 Summary and discussion

Reviewing the exiting literature has made it clear that although there are external factors for the decline of the traditional craft industry, internal factors are more significant in catering a solution. The internal factors for the decline of traditional craft industries are 1) sluggishness in developing products that meet consumer needs, 2) struggle to developing new sales channels, and 3) Lack of publicity. These could be seen as the poor linkage between producers and consumers, and it could be argued that the problem is caused by a lack of cooperation between producers and merchants. In response to it, traditional craft industries have attempted to attract consumers to visit them. This section discusses lessons that could be learned from the cases of Arita and Kyoto.

Sustainable activity

One of the lessons that may be learned from the cases of Arita and Kyoto is to have a long term perspective in order to build an attractive tourist town. Arita attempts to make the town eventful throughout the year, while Kyoto attempts to provide hands-on learning experience at workshops. However, both are not activities that attempt to increase the short term growth of sales. Rather, the attempts of Arita and Kyoto are to raise consumers' interest in traditional crafts first, which might indirectly lead to the growth of the industry in the long run. It may take a decade to see any growth of sales by such indirect strategies, and thus it is vital to limit the work to a sustainable extent - excessive hard work is unfeasible for such a long period. The case of Arita can be seen as sustainable because participants are voluntarily working, and is thus economical, and also, events are small scale, and are thus manageable. Their activity is different from holding a large event such as expositions or building an amusement park which requires a large budget for only a short period.

Short term goal

As was discussed above, it can be said that Arita's challenge is sustainable as a whole, nevertheless, it should be noted that there are some participants who are already discontent with the activity. It is necessary to increase the number of participants in order to avoid overwork of individual participants. In addition, it is important for participants to set short-term goals because it will help in maintaining motivation. Developing a town for tourism takes a long time, which might be trying for participants' motivation. It may be argued that setting a short term goal and achieving it could help participants to keep aiming ahead and in turn achieve a larger goal in scale and duration.

Developing an attractive town for participants themselves

In the case of Arita town, growth of the industry has not been realised, as a result of holding events throughout the year. However, people in the town were united through the monthly meeting where town development was discussed, and that could be seen as an achievement. People of Arita voluntarily guide tourists, which requires them to study their own town, which seems to have awoken the townspeople's local pride. Iguchi (2002) argued that a town that was not attractive for the people who were living there could not be attractive for tourists. It can be argued that it is important for participants of town development to love their town and to enjoy the process of development in order to create an appealing town for tourists.

Cooperation between producers and merchants

One of the weak points of Arita town is the poor preparation for workshop/factory visits, which contrasts with Kyoto's Taiken Kōbō. Despite the accumulation of a large number of pottery whorkshops and factories, it has not been utilised effectively enough as a tourist attraction. There are a large number of wholesale/retail shops in Arita, which create distinctive atmosphere of the pottery town, yet seeing workshops where Aritaware is actually produced should be far more impressive to visitors. It may be argued that the unwritten rule, where merchants deal with customers and producers stay behind the scenes, is hindering the effective use of workshops and factories in attracting tourists. Communication with consumers is essential for producers to develop the right products. A lack of understanding of consumers is a problem not only for producers, but also for merchants, and thus attracting visitors and communicating with them should be beneficial even for merchants themselves. Some merchants may hesitate to let producers meet consumers because they may lose business and their role as salesmen. However, it is a time to cooperate for both producers and merchants, otherwise, both of them might go down together.

Establishing tourist attractions for fun and to learning

Establishing a tourist town itself may not bring immediate growth to the local traditional craft industry. The activities of Kyoto and Arita are expected to improve public relations, and may eventually bring the growth of sales. The important point may be not to try to make business out of it directly because people are turned off at attractions which are built newly for the sake of tourism. There are too many amusement parks and shopping malls, and they are costly. Meanwhile, factory/workshop tours and hands-on learning experience there are often free or cheap to take part in. These are not only fun, but also intellectually stimulating. It may not be practical to actually show workshops as they are because it may be difficulty to maintain the safety and comfort of visitors, or may interrupt production itself. Thus, it may be necessary for firms to adjust or alter the existing workshops to some extent. Yet, it may be better for firms not to commercialise factory tours or hands-on learning experiences because it could reduce the original atmosphere and the uniqueness of workshop itself.

The author took part in a traditional dyeing programme at one workshop via Taiken Kōbō system. The firm had had a hands-on learning experience programme even before it joined the system of Taiken Kōbō, and thus the owner/instructor got used to hosting and instructing visitors. What participants learned and experienced was dyeing a white T shirt by traditional dyeing methods with a stencil and brush, but that was simple and unimpressive. The instructor spoke with participants, but did not talk about the dyeing method's history, or its traditional designs, or the firm's uniqueness. If Taiken Kōbō is a system to expect participants to improve understanding of traditional crafts, the cheap hand-on experience that the author had does not seem to be appropriate. Needless to say, the author's single experience is not enough to make generalisation, and the impression from the experience depends on each individual, and thus the argument here does not intend to criticise Taiken Kōbō itself. The point is that care must be taken when the traditional craft industry utilises its workshop to attract tourists and communication with them.

Stoke-on-Trent, the United Kingdom, is one of the largest pottery production areas in the world with the world's most well known firms such as Wedgwood, Spode and Portmeirion. British pottery firms were once very competitive in worldwide, for instance, the United Kingdom was the largest pottery export country for Japan in 2000[7]. There are quite a few firms which accept factory visits in Stoke. While large firms like Wedgwood and Spode accept visitors everyday, small and medium sized firms tend to designate certain days of the week for factory visits[8]. Traditional craft firms of Japan might also set aside time for accepting tourist visits, while maintaining the capacity to focus on their production.

In recent years, the centre of pottery production in the U.K. has been in a serious economic crisis, however, Burleigh, a small pottery firm with over 50 employees in Stoke, is performing well. It can be said that Burleigh has a unique competitive advantage in that Burleigh's factory is genuine Victorian, and its factory shop offers a beautiful country atmosphere[9]. This contrasts with factory visits of other firms which are either too commercialised or too factory-like. Japanese traditional craft firms may be able to learn from Burleigh.

This paper is based on translation of a part of '*Dentōteki kōgeihin sangyō no shinkō ni tsuiteno kōsatsu: Aritayaski, Hakataori, Kyoto no dentōteki kōgeihin zenpan wo jireitoshite* (Recent trends of the Traditioanl Craft Industy in Japan: The case of Arita, Hakata and Kyoto)', a paper published in *Keizaigaku Kenkyu* (*Journal of Political Economy, Kyushu University*) Vol. 73, No.1 and a few additional materials.

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Notes

1 *Inden* is lacquer-decorated deerskin, japan is lacquerware, and *Edo karakami* is Edo decorative paper.

2 *21seiki no nihon no dentō teki kōgeihin sangyō shisakuno arikata aratana seikatsu bunka sōzō ni mukete: tōshin-an* could be translated as *A Report on Policy for Traditional Craft Industries in Japan in* 21*th Century.*

3 *Dentōteki kōgeihin sangyō shingikai* could be translated as the Committee on Traditional Craft Industries.

4 (=Economic Planning Agency)

5 Shops that sell new experimental products, whereby customer feedback decides an item's future distribution.

6 As the ceramic tableware industry as a whole, including machine-made items, the tableware industry of Gifu prefecture is the largest.

7 *Shokki* (2009) No.170., pp. 39-40.

8 Information on factory visits and factory outlets of the U.K. pottery firms in this section is based on the visits and interviews at each firm by the author in January 2006.

9 Burleigh's success is not simply based on its attractive assets. The point is that this firm, in addition to high quality goods, has an attractive environment for worth visiting.