KYOCERA CORPORATION

SUTHEE PANAVORN

The Company

Kyocera Corporation started its business as a manufacturer of fine ceramics in 1959. Now, the company has a monopolistic position in the world's semiconductor package market where it commands a 70% share. In 1984, Kyocera achieved total sales of 251.2 billion yen (including those of affiliated companies, and Yashica, which was acquired in Oct. 1983), and operating profit of 56.2 billion yen and a net profit of 29.7 billion yen. With this exceptional performance, Kyocera is said to be the MVP among Japanese corporations.

The company's product line is varied centering on the application of find ceramic production technique and can be divided into the following product groups:

1. Ceramic parts related to semiconductor products (IC packages and other packages), electronic components (chip capacitors, thermoprinter heads etc.) and ceramic materials for the electronic industry. (In total, these accounted for 58.1% of sales)
2. Industrial ceramics (slider pads, cutting tool bits, automotive parts). (approx. 7.8%)
3. Jewelry. (2.8%)
4. Bio–materials (dental implants, artificial joints and bones) (0.8%)
5. Solar systems. (1.6%)
6. Electronic equipment (handheld computers, audio equipment, plane paper copiers etc.). (20.2%)

7. Optical instruments (cameras including those for medical use). (6.3%)

8. Others. (2.4%)

Among the excellent Japanese companies listed by Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Kyocera was the most outstanding corporation with its unique "AMOEBA" organization. What keeps this system working is "Kyoto Philosophy", or what someone might call "Kyocera Religion", which was instituted by the President and founder of the company, Kazuo Inamori.

History of The Company

Due to a conflict with his superior, Inamori resigned from Shofu Kogyo Co., Ltd., a producer of high voltage cable glass, and with a group of young confederates and a capital of three million yen, founded Kyocera in 1959 under the name of Kyoto Ceramic Co., Ltd. It was a small company with only 28 employees.

In 1963, Shiga Gomo plant was constructed, but the young Kyocera still had a hard time getting orders from large domestic companies because of lack of establishment. This forced Inamori to develop foreign markets. Through gaining recognition abroad he was then able to approach the leading domestic companies with credibiliy. In 1962, he visited the United States for the first time. There he recklessly made the offer "Let us make whatever others refuse to do." However, this effort achieved very little until 1965, when an order was placed by Texas Instrument (TI) Co., Ltd., for semiconductor packages to be used for electronic equipment for the Apollo Plan. Other companies refused to make these packages.

Then in 1966, a huge order for ceramic packages was recieved from IBM. Despite the fact that Kyocera's technology at that time could not possibly fulfill the requirement, Kyocera was successful in turning something impossible into the possible. This became Kyocera's style and drew the attention of the semiconductor industry. Kyocera's technology took long strides. Since then Kyocera has gained great reputation for innovation both inside Japan and out. In 1968, at the request of Fairchild Co., Ltd., Kyocera developed multi-layered packages for IC without any know-how in that field, and was awarded the Small and Medium Business Research Institute Award.

In 1969, in response to entreaties from U.S. semiconductor makers, Inamori established Kyocera international Inc. (KI), a small sales office, in Sunnyvale, CA. Here, the management style of the parent company was widely adopted. That is, the no-lay off, policy, the policy of working two or three times harder than other companies, and in bad times, getting machine operators to clean the floor or wash up. In the beginning the management was met with some resistance from the American people. Kyocera's philosophy was gradually accepted however, and helped to achieve high productivity and quality.

During the recession in 1971, a joint venture was set up with Feldmuhle AG of West Germany, followed by the aquisition of financially troubled Fairchild Camera's ceramic packaging plant in San Diego. This was Kyocera's first manufacturing base in the U.S.A.

Meantime, the low-priced plastic packages had already started to gain dominance amid ever-intensifying competition in the desk-top calculator industry. Still, Kyocera's strategy was developed centering on the multi-layered package, with a strong belief that ceramic packages and plastic packages would go side by side in the market, and that the company would dominate the world market by cutting down prices. Takayuki Maida, one of Kyocera's managers said "We are in the same market, plastic packages will never compete with our products."

Followed by a series of success in product development, Kyocera fought its way to be accepted by IBM and other prominent electronic companies.

1973 can be described as Kyocera's golden year as the semi-annual sales of the parent company first exceeded 10 billion yen, and annual sales turnover was more than two times that of the previous year with a profit after tax of 18 25%.

However, good times never last long. In the followyear, the company suffered a big blow from the first oil crisis. Domestic orders decreased and sales dropped sharply. A lot of companies had to adopted the layoff policy, but strong-willed Inamori persisted in his nolayoff policy. He had his idle work force participate in training and technical study meetings or even work on the company site weeding gardens and wash up.

Then came the turning point in the history of the company, Kyocera changed its strategic policy of focusing on semiconductor package to a policy of diversification. Inamori put emphasis on merchandising new products. During the period of hardship, Kyocera diversified into the fields of solar cells, cutting tools (Ceratip), recrystalized jewels (Crescent Vert), Bioceram (dental implants, artificial bones and joints) etc.

A series of subsidiary companies such as Japan Solar Energy Co., Ltd., Crestcent Vert Co., Ltd. and so on were set up and trading partners were increased for the purpose of lowering the company's dependence on semiconductor sales.

In response to the emergence of the so-called NICs in Asia, Kyocera also established Kyocera (Hong Kong) Ltd. as a sales company in 1977. Asia has since become the company's second largest market for semiconductor packages.

Inamori believes so strongly in his own intuition that despite opposition from his old friend Koichi Tsukamoto, President of Wacoal, and many other friends. Inamori went into the recrystalized jewel industry and expanded the business by increasing product line and sales stores. For example, "Inamori" store in Rodeo Drive in Bevery Hills, California.

Under the well-known spiritualistic leadership of Inamori, who always says something like "Let us achieve our goal. With continuous desire and zeal, it will work itself into the subconsciousness part of our being. Thus our success is assured." or "We are obligated to work two or three times harder than others." etc., Kyocera achieved an exceptionally fast growth, with an average annual growth rate of 29% from 1976-1981, and an enviable annual profit rate of 12% during the years 1976-1981

At present, Kyocera is said to be one of the fastest-growing and most profitable hi-tech company in the world with a 70% share of the U.S. semiconductor ceramic package market. It has been trying to change itself from a material supplier for electronic products to a manufacturer of the end user products, by integrating downstream, as can be seen from the establishment of Kagoshima Electronics in 1979, Kyocera Business Machine in 1981 and Kyocera Electronics in 1983 together with the mergers of Cybernet Industry Corp., Nihon Cast and New Medical, and then Yashica. Recently, Kyocera declared its "Dainidenden Project" (The Telephone and Telegraph Number Two Project), as telecommunication services in Japan will be liberalized at the beginning of April 1985.

What attracts the industry's attention, is not only the company's marketing strategic policy, but also, and perhaps to an even greater extent, its adoption of the so-called "Kyocera Style of Management".

Diversification Strategy

Kyocera started with new ceramics and moved into the fields of semiconductor packages, capacitors, ceramic chips and other electronic products by forming and processing new ceramic materials. For more than a decade, Kyocera was a maker of electronic parts. It was not until 1974, when the company stumbled over the oil crisis, that it realized the danger of depending on electronic parts sales alone.

Kyocera's first finished product was an artificial jewel Crescent Vert. Jewels were said to be the most difficult fashion goods to deal in, especially for an engineer like Inamori, who had no experience in consumer products, let alone jewelry. Although rejected by the natural jewelry stores, Inamori was not to be put off. He set up his own distribution system. In 1975, the first "Crescent Vert" shop, directly managed by Kyocera, was opened in Ginza. Inamori expanded his distribution system by concluding contracts to set as an agent for leading dry goods stores and opening sale display corners in major department stores. Eventally, the Sales Department became an independent Crescent Vert Co., Ltd. It began opening stores abroad in the following year. And now Crescent Vert is listed among the most profitable division in Kyocera.

From 1977, there were a series of mergers and establishment of new companies in the Kyocera group. In 1977, the Japan Solar Energy was set up as a joint venture between Kyocera and Tyco Lab., an affiliated company of the U.S. Mobil Co., for the purpose of developing silicon elements for solar cells. Four years later, Kyocera Business Machine Co., Ltd. was established and the Office Machine Sales Department of Shinko Offiice Machine Co., Ltd. was transfered to Kyocera, and in the following year Cybernet Industry Corp., Nihon Cast and New Medical were merged with Kyocera, and in 1983, Yashica, an Japanese optical instrument manufacturer, was acquired by the group. In 1983, Kyocera Electronics Co., Ltd. was set up. Kyocera's movement in recent years

shows that the company is trying to enter the field of electronic end user products and office automation equipment.

Aquisition of these companies provides Kyocera with more than one would imagine. Cybernet Ind. was a main manufacturer of CB transcievers, Yashica supplies Kyocera with its optical technology. The PC-8200, NEC's portable personal computer, as an OEM product also helps with the production of OA devices. Besides its technology, Kyocera gained access to Yashica's global sales network of more than two thousand domestic stores and one hundred oversea stores. Also Yashica's plant including Yashica Canada, Yashica Do Brasil and so on. All of these provide Kyocera with great potential for growth and mobility to new industries.

Moving into end user product industries was a lingcherished desire for Kyocera. Once Inamori tried to acquire Systec, a desk-top calculator manufacturer, when the competition was intensifying and the product life cycle was in the mature stage. He had to give up the idea within twenty-four days because he considered it too risky.

Regarding the diversification strategy, Maida comments "Those acquisitions were all a mere chance. We never expected nor demanded them. They came to us for help, the President considered it good to help troubled people, so the merger agreements were concluded. Our strategic policy is to diversify into the fine ceramic related fields, centering on fine ceramics, our mainstay product. If you ask me what our next step is, I have to tell you frankly, I do not know. But we always ask ourselves, 'What field can we apply our existing technology to?'. We never invest in unrelated fields like garments or food industries."

Kyocera's diversification into related fields itself is in effect an effort to create demand for its mainstay products.

However, a group of 225 companies called "Kyocera Group" (Named so because it was initiated by Kyocera, not the Kyocera's affiliated companies group.) announced recently its "Dainidenden Project" to welcome the coming liberalization of telecommunication service in Japan. This is the first unrelated business Kyocera will try to enter. Nevertheless, the business had not yet taken shape.

Causes of Changes of Strategy

As mentioned before, during the recession caused by the first oil crisis, Kyocera came to realize the danger of depending too much on a limited product line. Therefore, the company makes effort to diversify into growing industries, such as OA equipment. The OA equipment market as rapidly growing and estimatedly will reach 4 trillion 600 million yen by 1990. It is also one of the very few growing industries.

Another factor is that acermic SC packages are selling cheaper and cheaper as the industry matures, which means a smaller

margin for Kyocera as well. On the other hand, Cerdip packages, the company's mainstay profit maker, is said to be easy to produce, and at the same time, threaten by the cheaper-priced plastic packages. Although Kyocera argues that it is not a substitute for ceramics.

Everyone in the incredibly fast-growing and fast-changing hi-tech industry, of course, can never stop changing and adapting to changes. But for Kyocera, it is more than that, it has become its style to always challenge to something new, something seemingly impossible, and turn it into the possible. This is a part of the "Kyoto Philosophy", aimed at alerting and activating the people in the corporation.

So for, the diversification policy has been successful. And as Inamori said "This year (1981), we would like to reaffirm that the course we have been taking was the right one and to continue following this course these eight fields. We have so far been expanding latterally in various fields. Now we will move forward with all these fields side by side." However, according to the Kyocera's 1984 annual report, the jewelry division suffered a -4.4% decrease in sales. Moreover, Kyocera's audio equipment and other electronic products are not yet popular and highly evaluated. The camera market in Japan is in a declining stage, consequently, Kyocera's newly acquired camera make Yashica, who has only 2.0% share i single-lens camera market and 8.(

As a whole, Kyocera's new fields, like cameras, audio equipment, copy machines are not all growing industries, furthermore, there are giants who command remarkable market share in these fields. Therefore, for a new comer like Kyocera would not be able to reap large profit for the investment in its "Dainidenden Project". In other words, Kyocera might have been an excellent performer as a electronic parts supplier, but not yet as a maker of electronic end user products. The main reason for it is apparent the lack of marketing experience in the fields.

To deal with this problem, Kyocera sought cooperation from Seibu Group of Retail Enterprises, a group of Japanese retail companies now in limelight. An agreement was concluded in May 1984 for the purpose of the development of product systems, channels of distribution and so on.

Amoeba Organizati

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divided into divisions, such as the Artificial Jewel Division, Audio Equipment Division, Bioceram Div. etc. There are as many as 50 divisions in Kyocera. In each division, amoebas are formed. The divisions that produces added value are all broken into amoebas, except the Okaya plant, Yashica's main plant. For instance, in the Production Department, amoebas are formed according to the processes involved between purchase of raw materials to shipment of the product, i.e. forming, finishing, cutting, grazing and inspection.

An amoebe is the smallest unit with its own financial system. The leader of an amoeba is called "person in charge", is responsible for the management in the whole team. In evaluating the productivity of an amoeba the concept of "hourly added value", which indicates the added value per hour per member, is adopted.

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month. The amoeba that achieves a remarkable result is officially commended, while the person in charge of the amoeba that shows poor performance or deficit is repuired for reasons, and if no improvement is made, he is out of the position. "Of course, each amoeba is different in its nature, they cannot be evaluated by the same criterion. So, instead of comparing with other amoebas, we attach importance to whether there is any improvement compared with the previous year." explained Managing Director Aoyama.

Apart from providing high profitability, the amoeba structure (system) makes it easier and faster to find out weak points in the whole system, and pinpoints operation waste. This is the main reason why an amoeba must be kept as small as possible. In a large and complicated system, weak points are always blinded by good performance.

However, the amoeba organization, like other organizations, is not perfect. Overpursuing "hourly added of long-run ellects or ignorance of long-term problems.

Management Philosophy

Inamori is reputedly a very stingy businessman. He had no knowledge of accounting nor finance, when he started the company, but he believes strongly that dependence on borrowed money would decrease the mpany's profitability. Moreover, during d year, he had to save every yen he ake, therefore, cost-conscious In-

The accounting system is set up according to his Principle of Simplication (Cash System). That is : Accounting procedure must be simple so that anybody can handle it. All payments are to be done in cash. Evaluation of the final inventory is made by converting it into sale price value, except for jewels, which are done in terms of the total average cost.

All raw materials are to be purchased in only the quantity needed for the day. They are brought to the workshop as soon as they arrive. This minimizes the cost and the space required for storing them.

In order to save as much as possible, Inamori set up some rules when he founded his company.

1. Charges of private telephone calls must be paid by individuals.
2. Employees must not make private telephone calls during working hours.
3. Employees must not recieve private telephone calls except in an emergency case.
4. "Trading kit" such as abacus or slide rules are to be purchased at employees' own expenses, they are not supplied by the company.
5. Reference books needed for work are to be purchased by individual employees.

These rules have not only been continued until today, but they also have become a part of the company's spirit which maintains the corporation's high profitability.

Kyocera considers its ceramic products technologically advanced and innovative, and very high in value. But once they stay in stock for long, they are no more than pebbles only to be thrown away to cut down cost. Therefore, the inventory of ceramics is considered valueless from the view of accounting as well.

In Inamori's experience as an electronic parts maker, it is a matter of common sense that all buyers try to negotiate for lower price to minimize their cost. As a result, he came to realize that maximized profit can never be achieved from high selling prices, but from lowest cost.

Inamori's company is said to be military oriented, but an ex-manager said "It is not like an army, it is an army". With Inamori's "management with heart" concept, Kyocera is sometimes called "Inamori Sect".

"Creative ideas can never achieved by just thinking vaguely." Maida suggested "you have to be absorbed in the whirlpool of thoughts, all the time, with all your effort, as deeply as you can. When you can overcome it, there comes the light of the resolution." Kyocera people called it "subconsciousness".

When Inamori and seven ither confederates formed the company, they signed a blood oath of loyalty. And when an employee dies, he will be intered in a small company's cemetery. This shows strong sense of community among them.

There is no distinction between an employer and employees. We must work hard for the company we built through our mutual trust, and we must share our joy and sorrows. Our company should be like a boat

in which all of us share a mutual destination. We have nothing to depend on but a strong 'heart'. Our hearts mith mutual trust are invincible." is always heard when they talked about "Kyocera Philosophy"

For Kyocera, the desirable charactoristics for recruitment are

1. Having store motivation
2. Love of hard work
3. Being strict with oneself
4. Being energentic and meticulous
5. having ability, zeal and sensible way of thinking

The fifth condition is to be evaluated with the formula "ability x zeal x way of thinking". The former two each ranges from 0 to 100 points, while the latter ranges from–100 to 100 points. "Kyocera people are not all brilliant, but this formula does help us find personnels suitable for our company, which has consequently led to today's achievement.

Kyocera's amoeba organization is kept working by the "Kyoto Philosophy". When asked What is your hobby?", each and every employee will answer "Kyocera" or "Inamori", for this spiritualistic leader has dominated their minds.

Corporate Culture

As mentioned before, Kyocera has a unique management philosophy, they have a kind of spiritual mentality. They believe that there is little limit to human power, which to them, comes from the zeal and the pure heart of that person.

In order to promote mutual trust, Kyocera holds a great number of events each year, for instance, "compa" (drinking parties), sport events or even Christmas parties. "Of course, participation in these events is compulsary." said Maida.

These events provide chances for the employees to relax as well as to deepen mutual understanding, then mutual trust by playing, drinking together. Since the company's foundation, Inamori has hardly missed a chance to drink with his colleagues and discuss "What is life?", "What is work?", "What is our destination?" and the like.

At the same time, he also listens to the employees, discusses problems. "Compa" is a good informal opportunity to exchange opinions among them. Here Inamori's philosophy permeates among his men throughout the company.

The best opportunity for Inamori to implant his philosophy and obtain information from his employees is the year–end party. There used to be only once a year, but as the company grew up, the party came to be held according to division or department to make it small. They are all on different days so that Inamori can attend all. There is a legend that Inamori came to the party with his face burning red with fever.

Inamori says the philosophy emphasizes "respect of the Devine", calls for development of mutual trust and faith among managers and workers, and demands people "Nilling to work two or three times harder than anyone else."

It is said that in the Shiga plant, workers do not walk but run, foremen report to the plant manager with military salutes, and name of the previous day's absentees are read aloud before the assembled work force to make them lose face. Though, this kind of discipline is considered extreme and out-of-date even in Japan.

Maida notes "Our management philosophy, is unusual and seems to nor work anywhere in the world except Japan, but it is quite welcomed by the American workers in KI. This proves our philosophy is usable either in Japan or anywhere else."

In KI's plant in the U.S.A., workers do not run but everybody works. No chitchat, coffee drinking or loitering. There is callithenics as well as in Japan but not as long. Morning assemblies are not opposed by the workers anymore. "We asked them," Maida recalled "if moring assemblies are bad, they said 'No', then whether callithenics are good for health or not, they answered 'Yes'. They understand that we care for everybody, because we are kindred partners in the same community working for the same goal. Isn't it good that we work to improve our own community and never lose our jobs when the company goes into trouble?"

According to "Fortune" June 1,1981, KI's labor turnover ran at 2% a month, about one-third the typical rate in U.S. factories.

Kyocera, different from the American companies, listed loyalty and dedication, spirit and zeal, and cooperation ahead of performance and job knowledge. This is one cultural difference some American executives and other employees find hard to believe. Kyocera urges its employees to challenge to everything seemingly impossible and not to fear failure. The company deliberately employs a woman half-crippled with arthritis who is a terrible performer but never stops trying, because she is a good example to the employees.

Another discipline that first met opposition but was at last accepted is the 100% inspection quality control. The American executives considered it unnecessary. But customers found Kyocera's product the best in quality because they were almost perfect.

The main factor that helped Kyocera to echieve an overwhelming share of the business is its "high quality, superior service and low price".

"As a matter of fact, our product are not lowpriced, but we negotiate until we get a satisfactory price for both sides." argued Maida. There is a legend for Kyocera's desire to please its customers at all costs. An agent at Fairchild once told Kyocera that its prices were twice of American suppliers. It was not true, but the company cut its prices to Fairchild in half. Like what Inamori usually tells his subordinates : "Take every order you can, even if it is unreasonably cheap."

"These kinds of practices are not our strategy but our spirit." noted Maida.

Kyocera's Problems

Kyocera's success might have been phenomenal, nevertheless nothing assure its future. For the corporation has grew up at a surprising rate and diversified into a number of new businesses, where it has no

experience. How the company will cope with the new environment is a noteworthy issue.

The OA market, one of the fastest-growing industry, is estimated to reach more than 4.6 trillion yen in 1990 To all the electronic related manufacturers, it is a great charm but is the hardest-fought field as well. Giants like NEC, Japan IBM, Fujitsu, Toshiba, Hitachi, Canon, Ricoh, Seiko, Matsushita and Sharp are all involved. A new comer like Kyocera would find itself growing at a slower rate or not growing, or even having to quit.

Kyocera's rapid growth partly resulted from the recovery of the U.S. economy and the world's SC boom, for its exports to America accounted for a large portion of its sales. But the recovery of the U.S. economy has slowed down, at the same time, according to the recent news, the SC market has become oversupplied. Thus Kyocera's mainstay product, SC packages will certainly suffer a blow from the situation.

Kyocera's exports accounted for 48% of total sales in 1983, this rate is not expected to change. And approximately 70% of its exports are to America. Kyocera is aware of its overdependence on the U.S. economy, and is now trying to reduce it by diversifying into related fields.

In the later half of 1984, NTK Technical Ceramics, Kyocera's main rival, announced an increase in IC package production. On the other hand, SC manufacturers useally reducl their cost by switching to cheaper plastic packages, made at their plants. Packages of glass fiber also compete with ceramics, though so far constitute a tiny share of the SC packaging market.

Another new industry Kyocera is entering is communication service. Besides Kyocera, JNR, the Highway Corp., the Keidanren Group and so on are planning to enter the industry as well. Certainly, there will be a severe competition on price, quality and service. JNR and the Highway Corp, are in a more favorable position for they own the land for constructing the comunication line. The Kyocera group expects to starts their business in 1989. Inamori has already announced that their service charge would cost only half of that of the existing NTT. When asked why he decided to enter the field, Inamori never gives any reason but answers "If I do not do it, I am not a man."

Another issue is the restless leader Inamori himself. He is reputedly an autocratic leader, who founded and built everything Kyocera is today. With his extraordinary charisma, he leads the company to prosperity. It might not seem to be a problem for the time being, because he is only 53 years old, but, like other charismatic leaders, it is always a big problem to find an capable successor, especially for Kyocera. As one familiar with Inamori's ways said "People who work for Kyocera don't grow up, after 25 years all they know how to do is work hard and follow orders." When there is on more Inamori, who will be the one who gives orders?

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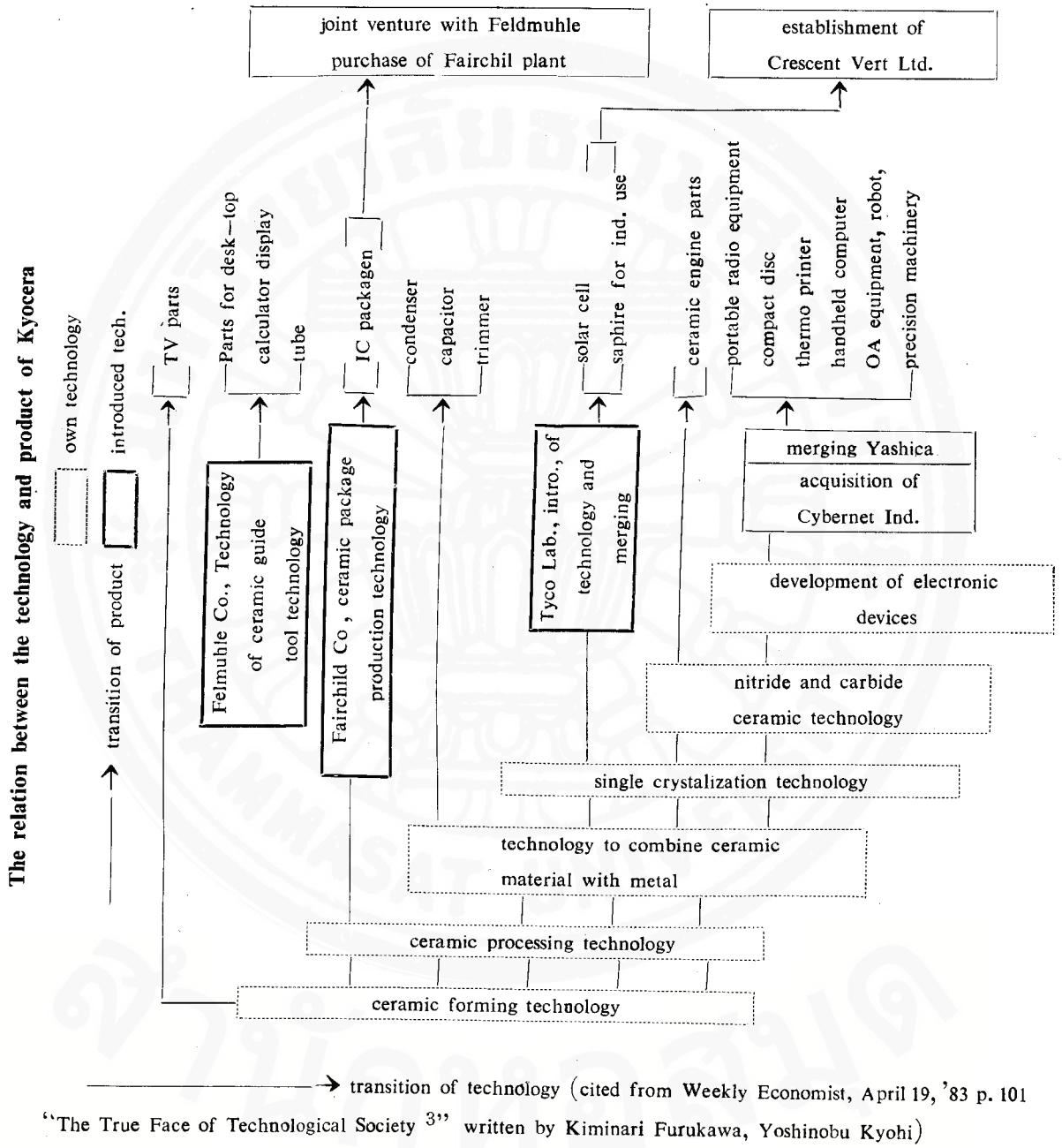
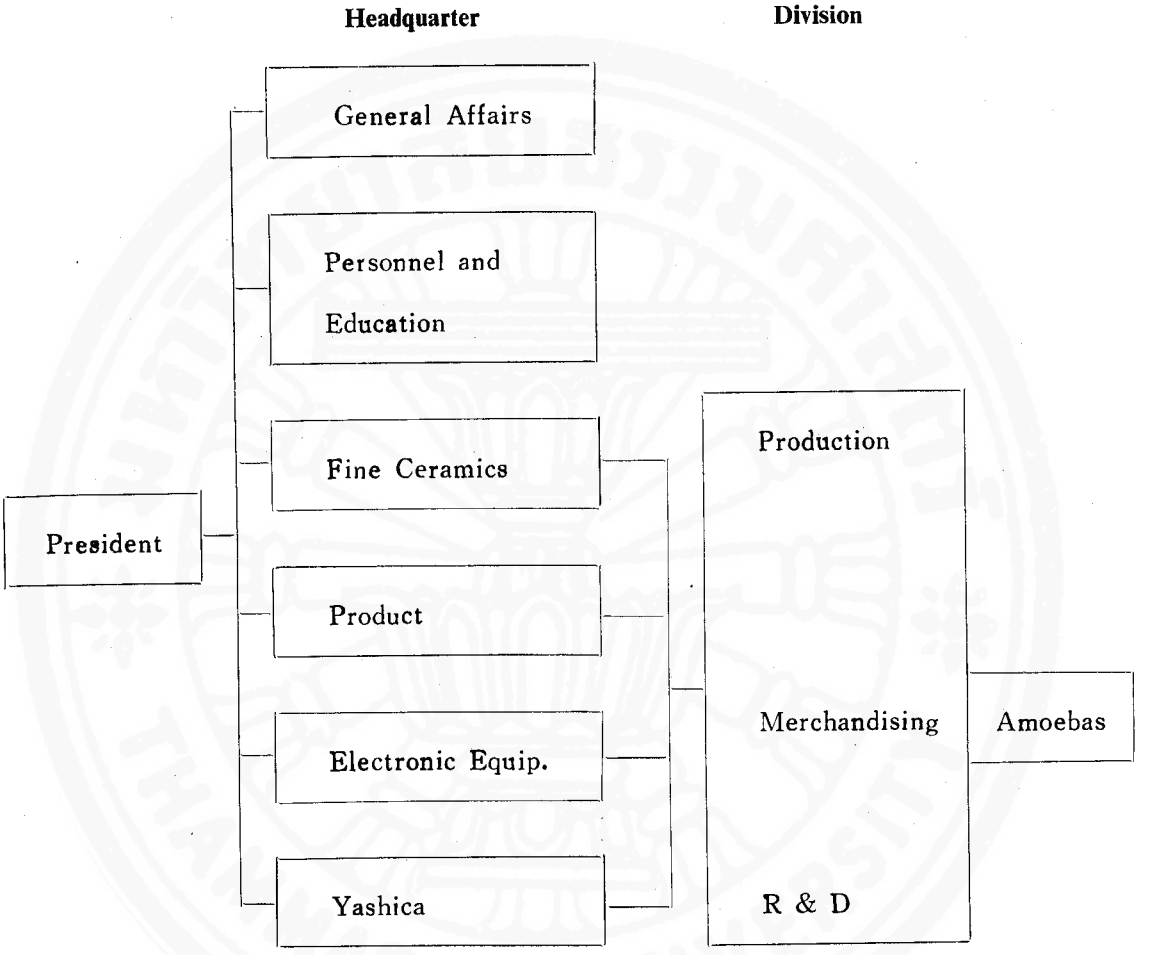


(cited from Weekly Economist, April 19, '83 p. 101 "The True Face of Technological Society 3" written by Kiminari Furukawa, Yoshinobu Kyohi)

EXIBIT I

Kyocera's organization



EXIBIT II

Comparison of ceramic package manufacturers

year : 1983, unit : billion yen

	Domestic Sales	Exports	Total	Oversea Production	Total Sales	Market Share (%)
Kyocera	300	500	800	180	980	70
NTK	60	140	200		200	14
Narumi	30	70	100		100	7
Others				120	120	9
Total	390	710	1,100	300	1,400	100

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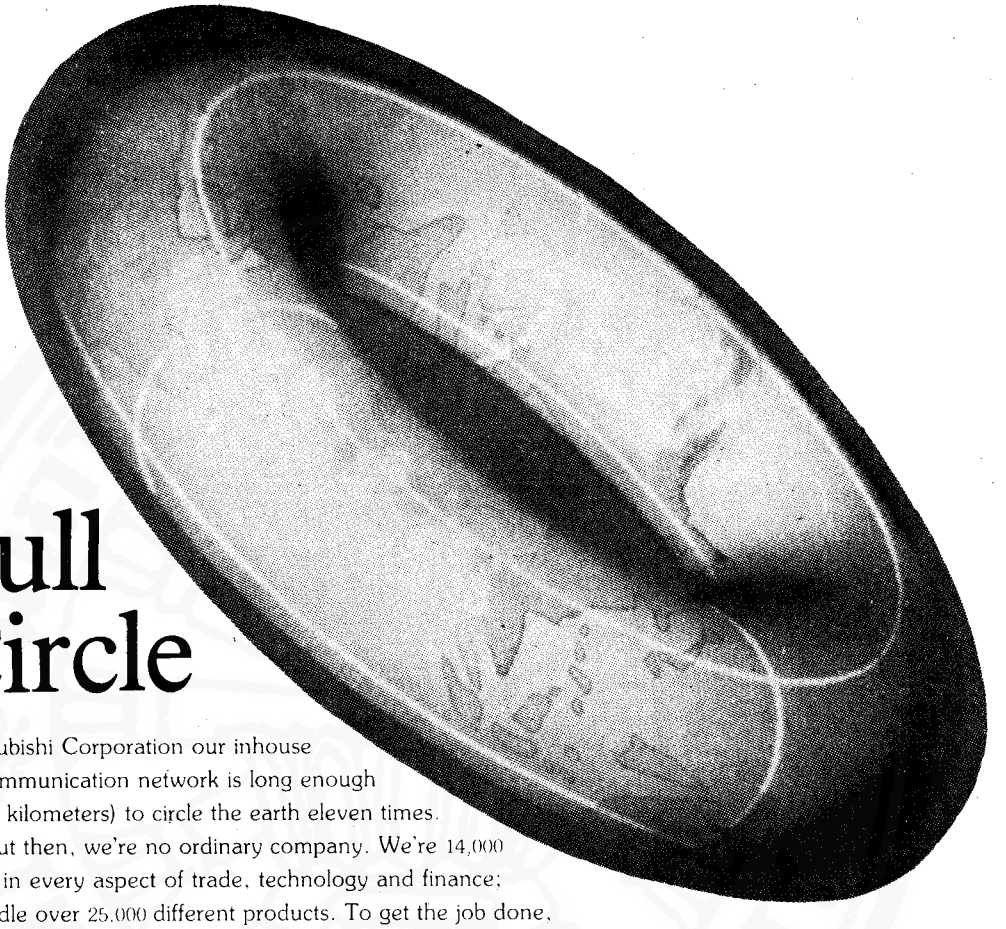

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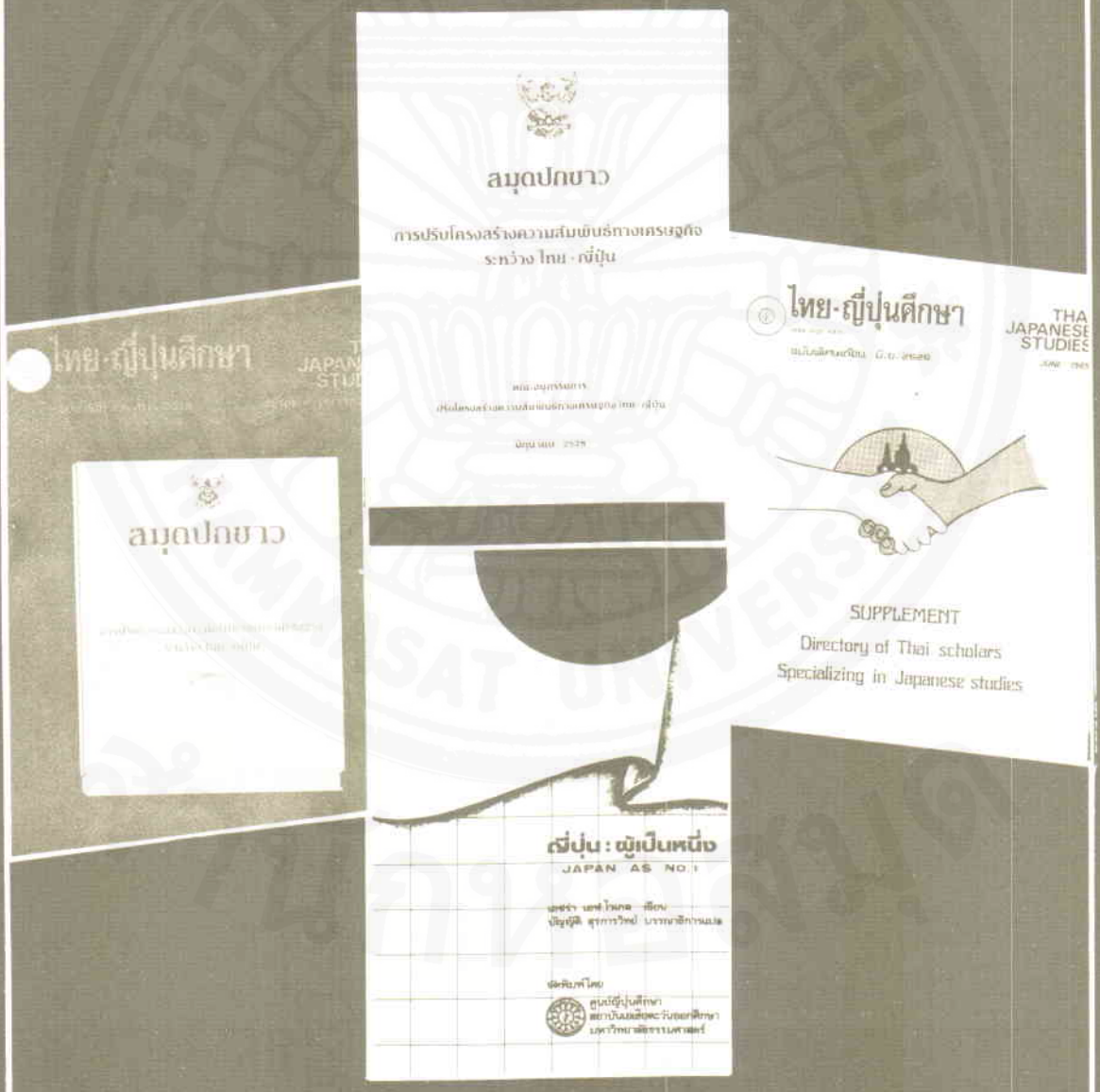

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