This year, we honor Mr. Yuzaburo Mogi, Honorary CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kikkoman Corporation with the Keizai Silicon Valley Lifetime Achievement Award for US-Japan Business.

Mr. Mogi joined Kikkoman in 1958 and has since been laying the foundation for the company’s foreign expansion. In 1957 Kikkoman established a sales company in San Francisco. In 1973 Kikkoman built its first soy sauce manufacturing plant in Wisconsin. In 1995 he became President and CEO of the firm and was still tirelessly transforming and expanding Kikkoman to be a worldwide business.

Aside from giving the keynote speech, Mr. Mogi will participate in a fireside chat with Prof. Richard Dasher touching on the hardships of globalization and how to succeed in a global economy. We will also be performing our traditional Kagamiwari (sake barrel “breaking”) ceremony. The Consul General of Japan, Mr. Jun Yamada is expected to lead this tradition. ❀
Yuzaburo Mogi is Honorary CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kikkoman Corporation. He joined Kikkoman in 1958 after graduating from Keio University. In 1961, he became the first Japanese national to earn an MBA from Columbia University. He was appointed to the position of President and CEO in 1995, and Chairman and CEO in 2004. He assumed his current position in 2011.

Kikkoman established its U.S. headquarters in San Francisco in 1957 to start full-scale sales and marketing activities for its soy sauce. This was followed by a U.S. soy sauce manufacturing plant in Walworth, Wisconsin in 1973, which was one of the first Japanese manufacturing facilities on American soil. In 1998 Kikkoman began soy sauce production at a second plant in Folsom, California. Additionally, JFC International, a Kikkoman subsidiary, distributes oriental foodstuffs throughout the U.S.

Outside of Kikkoman, Mr. Mogi is currently Chairman of the Japan Productivity Center, Joint Chancellor of Japan Akademeia, Life-time Trustee of Keizai Doyukai (the Japan Association of Corporate Executives), Chairman of the Japan - Midwest U.S. Association, Trustee Emeritus of Columbia University, Member of the Board of Overseers of Columbia Business School and Honorary Ambassador of the State of Wisconsin. He also served in public roles such as Chairman of the Council for Administrative Reduction and Efficiency, Chairman of the Council for Comprehensive Review of Administrative Expenditures, and Member of the Government Revitalization Unit.

He was awarded the Medal with Blue Ribbon of Japan in 1999, the Order of Orange Nassau from the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2003, and the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2006. He has published a number of books including “The Day Soy Sauce Made it to America’s Tables,” “Overseas Strategies Without Friction,” “Kikkoman’s Global Management,” and “Borders are Made to be Crossed.”

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This year Keizai Silicon Valley is pleased to welcome Yuzaburo Mogi to our Shinnenkai as the featured honoree. Mr. Mogi’s business career is intertwined with the development of the Asian food market in the United States. Mogi-san earned an MBA from Columbia University in 1961. While at Columbia, he engaged in marketing efforts to promote his family’s company Kikkoman and its soy sauce in America. An ingenious marketing scheme raised the popularity of soy sauce among American housewives of the 1960’s. While a student at Columbia, Mogi-san determined that suddenly making Asian dishes popular among Americans would be difficult. Rather he hired chefs to create new recipes that incorporated soy sauce into American dishes. He then sent these recipes to local newspapers. Housewives would cut out the recipes and shop for the ingredients, including Kikkoman soy sauce. Through further popularizing of Japanese soy sauce and teriyaki sauce, Kikkoman was able to become a major player in the American food market.

Parallel to the development of Kikkoman in America was the story of La Choy. Originally founded by Korean entrepreneur Ilhan New in 1922, by the 1950’s it was controlled by three Irish-Americans, who thus stumped the panel on the TV Show “What’s My Line.” La Choy paved the way for Asian foods in American households with its 1970’s jingle “La Choy makes Chinese food swing American.” And the first full-bodied muppet was Delbert the La Choy Dragon, created by Jim Henson and Frank Oz in 1965, prior to the actual muppets of Sesame Street.

Companies like Kikkoman and La Choy forged a solid foothold for Asian foods in the American households of the 60’s and 70’s. If not for entrepreneurs like Yuzaburo Mogi, American cuisine might have been stuck in a lack of variety with only European-based recipes. We salute companies like Kikkoman who have enriched the American dinner table. Come to our Shinnenkai on Friday, January 26th and hear more of the story of Yuzaburo Mogi and Kikkoman.
CLEAN TECH DEVELOPMENT

By Joe Quinlan

On Thursday, November 9, 2017, Keizai Silicon Valley welcomed three strong proponents of electric vehicles (EV’s) to our forum “Clean Tech Development and the Role of State and Federal Regulation in Structuring Emerging Markets”. The event was ably moderated by Luisa Elkins of Procopio. Luisa started the event by pointing out that the global projected emissions path is much higher than what is needed to stay below the projected 2° C increase in global temperature.

EV and energy consultant Sven Thesen led off the panel commentary with his charismatic enthusiasm for EV’s. Sven believes that plug-in hybrids will fade away in favor of long-range EV’s, like the Tesla Model S. Sven pointed out that charging speeds can be expressed in miles per hour, with fast-charging (220V) EV’s charging at a rate of about 24 to 30 mph. By comparison, a standard 120V outlet charges at about 4 mph. Sven also spoke of the increasing ubiquity of charging stations. Interestingly, certain supermarkets tend to give the first charging hour for free and then start charging beyond that, as they want to get you in and out of their store quickly.

Tim Duane, attorney with Procopio, brought a legal side to the event. Tim pointed out that among California’s many exports are climate change policy, in that the rest of the US and the federal government tend to mimic what California has done first. Tim also provided the insight that autonomous vehicles (AV’s) are likely to have a tremendous positive effect on the EV market. This is particularly true in California, where transportation emissions are three times the level of emissions caused by electric power generation. One key observation is that since AV’s tend to get operated much more than non-AV’s, converting AV’s to EV’s means we don’t need as many EV’s to get the same emissions reduction effect. As a corollary, the advent of AV’s could dramatically increase TaaS (transportation as a service, like Uber), and this could largely become an EV market. One challenge for future green energy will be that solar power is collected during the day, whereas electric vehicles want to recharge at night.

David Schlosberg of eMotorwerks wrapped up the presentations by providing the perspective of a manufacturer of charging stations. Interestingly, eMotorwerks was recently acquired by Enel Energy, which is Italy’s power provider. David pointed out that as the EV market grows, the electrical grid capacity also has to grow. Within this problem, there are very few EV professionals who speak both power industry-speak and car-speak. There is a knowledge gap between these two fields. One example problem that arises is the tendency of EV owners to all start charging their cars at 11pm. In spite of this phenomenon, the California Public Utilities Commission has not put in place a rate structure that would discourage this behavior.

All in all, it was a very educational evening, with three unique perspectives on the EV market and the power industry that supports it.

Additional event photos can be found here — Kezai event photos.
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