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2 ~ 4

Attractiveness and
fun of JRA
horseracing from
the foreigners'
point of view

4

Leading
New Stallions
for 2009

5

2008 JRA Awards

6

NAR Grand Prix
2008

6 ~ 7

A Review of JRA
Racing & Breeding in
Japan for 2008

8

2008 JRA
Leading Horses
Japanese Principal
Race Results



Attractiveness and fun of JRA horseracing from the foreigners' point of view

By Michael Tabart

Racing fans worldwide would have to be aware of the increasing presence of Japanese trained horses on the international racing scene. However, it is very likely that few have experienced the Japan Racing Association (JRA) racing in Japan.

The JRA has 10 racecourses around Japan, from Sapporo and Hakodate on the northern island of Hokkaido, to the Kokura Racecourse on the southern island of Kyushu.

Racing takes place every Saturday and Sunday of the calendar year (although depending on the dates, there can be a break over the New Year



period). There is also racing on certain Mondays, to create a long weekend of racing.

The general pattern of racing is to race at one track for one – or sometimes two months at a time, with races at two or three tracks around the country every weekend. Usually, the JRA will try to have simultaneous race meetings in both eastern and western Japan, sometimes with a third race meeting at one of the provincial (outside the Tokyo and Osaka regions) racecourses.

A day out at each racecourse is an experience in itself. Each track is different, as is the atmosphere. From the huge crowds on Grade 1 racedays in Tokyo



Mt. Fuji that can be seen from Tokyo Racecourse.



Horse racing with cherry blossoms in full bloom.

(and Nakayama), to the picturesque Kyoto and Hanshin courses (beautiful in cherry blossom season), and the laid back atmosphere of summer racing at Kokura – each racecourse has its own charming features.

A day at the races in Japan starts early. With the exception of a few major racedays every year, each raceday is comprised of 12 races, usually beginning just about 10am, and with the last race around 4:30pm. The quality of horses appearing improves throughout the day, with the early races generally for maiden gallopers, then set condition races for one race winners, two race winners etc., through to the top class horses who

appear in the main race of the day – Race 11. Races 9 through 12 are usually “Tokubetsu (Black Type)” races which have added stakes money and are contested by the best horses. So punters can choose to save their money for the better quality races, or try and increase their cash throughout the day by finding standouts in the earlier races, or maybe by picking a rough combination to win a big trifecta.

One fascinating aspect of racing in Japan, is the wide ranging conditions of the races. Not only are there turf races, there are also many dirt races, both over many varying distances. Both surfaces have their differences with racecourses overseas. The turf tracks are prepared impeccably – first time visitors at JRA racecourses are always impressed by the number of people out on the track after every race, checking for holes or rough areas – then fixing them! As a result, Japanese tracks record some very fast times. On the other hand, the dirt tracks are significantly different to those seen in North America. Although the word used to officially describe them in Japan is dirt, many people have de-



Kyoto Racecourse featuring a beautiful pond in the infield.



Kinkakuji that represents the old city Kyoto.

scribed them as “more sand than dirt.” The times on dirt are much slower than on turf, but that can change when the track is wet. It is easier to run on wet sand than it is on dry sand!

The other unique aspect of Japanese racing is the knowledge that Japanese fans have of their horses. As there are usually only 72 or less races a week, and as the whole Japanese racing set up is extremely well managed by the JRA, racing fans in Japan have access to all sorts of information from training times, to dates of spelling, and even changes in each horse’s body weight. This culture of information and knowledge is encouraged in every facet of the racing game, with the JRA even ensuring that before every race, punters have ample opportunity to inspect the horses in the mounting yard (or “paddock” as it is called in Japan), and then watch the horses they are interested in make their way around to the gates with plenty of time to spare before placing their bets.

With 30 to 40 minutes between each race (and a break for lunch!), Japanese punters have plenty of time to make their way through all the information in the form guide, and then inspect their short listed horses, before coming to their final conclusion.

Like so many aspects of life in Japan, although there is plenty of information available to Japanese punters, so far, it is a different story when trying to find

information in English. However, the official racing program does have some English in it and JRA is gradually increasing instruments and publications written in English, such as an ‘Overlay’ for betting cards and a ‘How to bet’ pamphlet.

The best way for anyone to approach a trip to the races in Japan (unless you are the adventurous type who would like to test your luck in Japanese!) is to check the English homepage named “**Horse Racing in Japan**” (<http://japanracing.jp/>) by the JRA and JAIR before heading out to the track. Visitors to Japan can find all sorts of information about Japanese racing at the homepage, including information on where the races will be held, how to read the race program and form guides and most importantly, how to bet!

There are three cards that are used to bet at the races in Japan and although they are well designed and very useful once you are accustomed to them, it can be confusing for the novice punters, especially if you do not understand Japanese. There are windows where you can give your tickets to an operator who will put them through the machine, but there are also many automated ticket machines where the majority of punters place their bets. It is usually a good idea to put your bets through early if you are visiting, because as the race gets close to starting time, there can be significant lines at

the ticketing windows and machines and also because it is more than likely that you have made a mistake!

In the past in Japan, the most popular form of betting was the “quinella” where punters would choose two horses to finish 1st and 2nd in any order. Horses in Japanese races are also allocated into up to 8 brack-

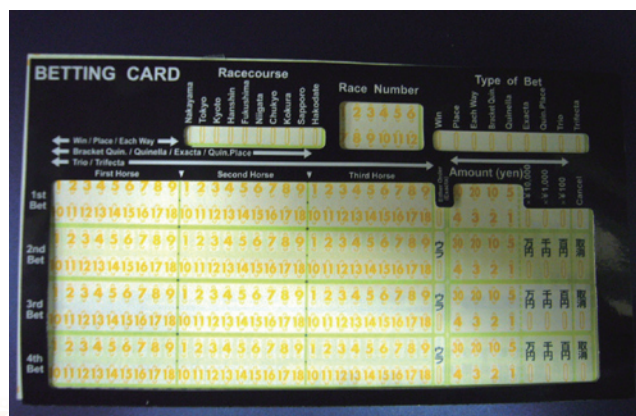
ets depending on their barrier draw, and the “bracket quinella” has always been popular in Japan (it is easier to pick a winner, as there are only 8 “chances,” but the dividends will on average be lower). Be careful when you have a bracket quinella though, because if you choose 1 & 2, you do not win if the 1st and 2nd horses both come from the same bracket!

Win and place betting is also available in Japan, but it is almost never the biggest pool. In saying that, one thing you almost never have to worry about when betting on Japanese races is that your bet will change the odds of your selection. Even from early morning races, the pools in Japan are so big, that you will almost never change the odds - unless you are betting very significant amounts! The JRA has gradually introduced more and more types of betting into Japan, so that now it is also possible to have exactas (picking 1st and 2nd in order), trios (1st, 2nd and 3rd in any order), and trifectas (1st, 2nd and 3rd in correct order) if you want to try and hit that big return, or if you feel confident about the order of horses in a race with only a small field.

Once you have mastered the art of betting in Japan (betting - not necessarily winning!), and once you begin to pick up more and more information, you begin to understand that Japanese racing is a fascinating sport. With huge stands at every racecourse, you are guaranteed a seat on normal racedays, and on the big days with the huge crowds, you do not need a seat with all the excitement.

As far as sporting atmosphere goes, there is very little in Japan and possibly the world, to rival the goose bumps you get seconds prior to the start of a major race in Japan. The thousands of Japanese fans overflowing from the stands and into the area in front of the stand and the course itself, all cheering and clapping in unison with anticipation. The cheer that goes up when a favored horse makes its move approaching the last turn, or the moan that echoes around before silence hits when a group of outsiders hit the line first. There really is nothing like it. Knowing your horses, and knowing your races makes it all the more enjoyable.

As more and more races are opened up to foreign-trained horses, there will be more and more international participation in JRA racing. You can bet that the JRA will continue to come up with new ideas and also strive to increase the amount of English information available.



With Overlay, you can find out what is written in a Japanese betting card in English.

For those who enjoy a bet and love the thrill of cheering their horse home, or for those who would like a good day out in “real Japan” with thousands of locals creating a spectacle for you, a visit to the JRA races may be just what you were looking for.

For those who are interested, but are a bit worried about trying to get through a day on their own, the JRA has introduced a special tour to Tokyo Racecourse which is ideal for first time patrons visiting from overseas. The reasonably priced tour (9800 yen at the time

of printing) not only gets you to and from the track, but includes an English speaking guide, reserved seats in the impressive grandstand, and entry into the racing museum on site at Tokyo racecourse.

You can search for the “JRA Official Tour” at <http://japanracing.jp/tour/index.html> for more details.

For the more adventurous, or for those visitors with more time in Japan, why not combine a trip to the races when travelling to the ancient capital of Kyoto?

Kyoto Racecourse is located in between Kyoto (with all those temples and ryokans) and Osaka, the food capital of Japan, and a very different culture of that in Tokyo. Or depending on where the races are on when you are here, you could visit the Hanshin Racecourse, located between Osaka and Kobe – famous for its international background as one of Japan’s major ports. In any case, with the number of racecourses located around the country, if you are in Japan over the weekend, you can have a great time at the races!

Leading New Stallions for 2009

By Masayuki Itoh, The Japan Bloodhorse Breeders’ Association (JBBA)

The beginning of a new year in the breeding areas, is the most tension-filled time of the year for matching the determination with the preparations for the upcoming breeding season. New stallions coming to stud are a special cause of growing concern, and conversely, expectations, for the new season.

The JBBA Breeding Information Department carried out an independent

survey based on the advance reports for new stallions in Japan scheduled to make their debut in 2009.

This survey shows that there are 17 new stallions in Japan as of the 14th of January. Three of these were newly imported (two bred in U.S. and one in France). 14 of the stallions had raced in Japan.

The survey also reveals that at this

time, Arrow Stud (Shin-hidakacho), Yushun Stallion Station (Niikappucho) and Shadai Stallion Station (Abiracho) have plans to introduce three of the stallions.

We have compiled a table of information about new stallions for 2009, which includes their pedigrees and where they are slated to stand. Four of the stallions are identified as follows:



Aldebaran (USA), 1998, bay



Chichicastenango (FR), 1998, gray



Meisho Samson (JPN), 2003, bay



Black Tide (JPN), 2001, dark bay

New Stallions to Stand in Japan in 2009 (Domestic only)

No.	Stallion	Stud	Sire	Dam	Bloodmare sire
1	Aldebaran(USA)	JBBA Shizunai Stallion St.	Mr. Prospector (USA)	Chimes of Freedom (USA)	Private Account (USA)
2	Suzuka Phoenix	Arrow Stud	Sunday Silence (USA)	Rose of Suzuka (IRE)	Fairy King (USA)
3	Fusaichi Ho O	Arrow Stud	Jungle Pocket	Admire Sunday	Sunday Silence (USA)
4	Fusaichi Richard	Arrow Stud	Kurofune (USA)	Fusaichi Airedale	Sunday Silence (USA)
5	Giant Wrecker (USA)	East Stud	Giant's Causeway (USA)	Homewrecker (USA)	Buckaroo (USA)
6	Native Heart	East Stud	Star of Cozzene (USA)	Potomac Cherry	Northern Taste (CAN)
7	Chichicastenango (FR)	Shadai Stallion St.	Smadoun (FR)	Smala (FR)	Antheus (USA)
8	Admire Jupiter	Shadai Stallion St.	French Deputy (USA)	J's Jewelry	Real Shadai (USA)
9	Meisho Samson	Shadai Stallion St.	Opera House (GB)	My Vivien	Dancing Brave (USA)
10	Tagano Guernica	Tagano Farm	Brian's Time (USA)	Broadmara (IRE)	Thatching (IRE)
11	Silent Deal	Breeders Stallion St.	Sunday Silence (USA)	Fairy Doll (USA)	Nureyev (USA)
12	Black Tide	Breeders Stallion St.	Sunday Silence (USA)	Wind In Her Hair (IRE)	Alzao (USA)
13	Nike a Delight	Yushun Stallion St.	Diablo (USA)	Nike Alamode	Thrill Show (USA)
14	Personal Rush (USA)	Yushun Stallion St.	Wild Rush (USA)	Personally (USA)	Alydar (USA)
15	Bonus Fever (USA)	Yushun Stallion St.	Seeking the Gold (USA)	Angel Fever (USA)	Danzig (USA)
16	Quiet Day	World Farm	Sunday Silence (USA)	Aly's Delight (USA)	Alydar (USA)
17	Sieg Emblem (USA)	Suwa Farm	Storm Cat (USA)	Myth (USA)	Ogygian (USA)

* Provided by JBBA Breeding Information Department independent survey

2008 JRA Awards

Horse of the Year And Best Older Filly or Mare



VODKA (JPN)
4-year-old, filly, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Tanino Gimlet / Tanino Sister (Rousillon)
Owner: Yuzo Tanimizu
Breeder: Country Bokujo
Trainer: Katsuhiko Sumii
2008 Wins / Starts: 2 / 7
(including one race overseas)
Career Wins / Starts: 7 / 18
2008 Earnings: ¥394,578,000
(¥28,010,000 overseas)
Career Earnings: ¥821,588,000
Principal Wins in 2008:
Tenno Sho Autumn (G1),
Yasuda Kinen (G1)

Best Two-Year-Old Colt



SEIUN WONDER (JPN)
2-year-old, colt, black
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Grass Wonder / Seiun Kunoichi
(Sunday Silence)
Owner: Takao Otani
Breeder: Yukifumi Tsutsui
Trainer: Masazo Ryoke
2008 Wins / Starts: 3 / 4
Career Wins / Starts: 3 / 4
2008 Earnings: ¥104,550,000
Career Earnings: ¥104,550,000
Principal Win in 2008: Asahi Hai Futurity
Stakes, Niigata Nisai Stakes

Best Two-Year-Old Filly



BUENA VISTA (JPN)
2-year-old, filly, dark bay or brown
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Special Week / Biwa Heidi (Caerleon)
Owner: Sunday Racing Co., Ltd.
Breeder: Northern Farm
Trainer: Hiroyoshi Matsuda
2008 Wins / Starts: 2 / 3
Career Wins / Starts: 2 / 3
2008 Earnings: ¥68,088,000
Career Earnings: ¥68,088,000
Principal Win in 2008: Hanshin
Juvenile Fillies

Best Three-Year-Old Colt



DEEP SKY (JPN)
3-year-old, colt, chestnut
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Agnes Tachyon / Abi (Chief's Crown)
Owner: Toshio Fukami
Breeder: Kasamatsu Bokujo
Trainer: Mitsugu Kon
2008 Wins / Starts: 5 / 10
Career Wins / Starts: 5 / 14
Earnings in 2008: ¥534,263,000
Career Earnings: ¥541,363,000
Principal Wins in 2008: NHK Mile Cup,
Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby),
Kobe Shimbun Hai, Mainichi Hai

Best Three-Year-Old Filly



LITTLE AMAPOLA (JPN)
3-year-old, filly, dark bay or brown
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Agnes Tachyon / Little Harmony
(Commander in Chief)
Owner: Shadai Race Horse
Breeder: Shiraoi Farm
Trainer: Hiroyuki Nagayama
2008 Wins / Starts: 2 / 6
Career Wins / Starts: 4 / 8
2008 Earnings: ¥147,436,000
Career Earnings: ¥161,436,000
Principal Wins in 2008:
Queen Elizabeth II Commemorative Cup
(G1), Queen Cup

Best Older Colt or Horse



SCREEN HERO (JPN)
4-year-old, colt, chestnut
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Grass Wonder / Running Heroine
(Sunday Silence)
Owner: Teruya Yoshida
Breeder: Shadai Farm
Trainer: Yuichi Shikato
2008 Wins / Starts: 3 / 6
Career Wins / Starts: 5 / 18
2008 Earnings: ¥363,127,000
Career Earnings: ¥426,311,000
Principal Wins in 2008: Japan Cup (G1),
Copa Republica Argentina

Best Sprinter or Miler



SLEEPLESS NIGHT (JPN)
4-year-old, filly, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Kurofune / What Katy Did (Nureyev)
Owner: Sunday Racing Co., Ltd.
Breeder: Northern Farm
Trainer: Kojiro Hashiguchi
2008 Wins / Starts: 5 / 6
Career Wins / Starts: 9 / 16
2008 Earnings: ¥242,400,000
Career Earnings: ¥309,693,000
Principal Wins in 2008: Sprinters Stakes
(G1), Kitakyushu Kinen, CBC Sho (G3)

Best Dirt Horse



KANE HEKILI (JPN)
6-year-old, horse, chestnut
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Fuji Kiseki / Life Out There
(Deputy Minister)
Owner: Kaneko Makoto Holdings Co., Ltd
Breeder: Northern Farm
Trainer: Katsuhiko Sumii
Wins / Starts in 2008: 2 / 3
(Including one NAR start)
Career Wins / Starts: 10 / 17
(including three NAR wins)
Earnings in 2008: ¥213,570,000
(including one NAR win)
Career Earnings: ¥691,624,700 (including
one race overseas and four NAR races)
Principal Wins in 2008: Japan Cup Dirt
(G1), Tokyo Daishoten

Best Steeplechase Horse



KING JOY (JPN)
6-year-old, horse, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam):
Marvelous Sunday / Princess Able
(Jade Robbery)
Owner: Takao Matsuoka
Breeder: Kawakami Bokujo
Trainer: Yutaka Masumoto
2008 Wins / Starts: 2 / 3 (all jump races)
Career Wins / Starts: 4 / 32
(4 / 14 jump races)
2008 Earnings: ¥151,252,000
Career Earnings: ¥277,293,000
(¥273,043,000 in jump races)
Principal Wins in 2008: Nakayama
Daishogai, Kyoto High Jump



**Best Trainer
(Races Won,
Training Technique)**
YASUTOSHI IKEE



**Best Trainer
(Winning Average)**
HIDEAKI FUJIWARA



**Best Trainer
(Money Earned)**
KATSUHIKO SUMII



**Best Jockey
(Races Won,
Winning Average)**
YUTAKA TAKE



**Best Jockey
(Money Earned)**
YASUNARI IWATA



**Best Steeplechase
Jockey**
MAKOTO NISHITANI



**Best Jockey
(Newcomer)**
KOSEI MIURA

JRA Equine Cultural Award

"It's Another Day in the Life of Racing: a travel column for race lovers"
by Takeshi Kamewada
(Published by "Hon no Zasshi sha")

NAR Grand Prix 2008



Horse of the Year Best Thoroughbred Older Colt or Horse

Furioso
(c) Ichikanpo



Best Thoroughbred 2-Year-Old

Ampere
(c) Ichikanpo



Best Thoroughbred 3-Year-Old

Dream Sky
(c) Tokyo City Keiba (TCK)

**Best
Anglo-Arab Horse**
None selected



Best Ban-ei (Draft) Horse

Narita Bob Sapp
(c) Ban-ei Tokachi



Best Thoroughbred Sprinter or Miler

Fujino Wave
(c) Ichikanpo



Best Thoroughbred Filly or Mare

Tosens Jo O
(c) Ichikanpo



Best Thoroughbred Turf Horse

Executive
(c) Japan Racing Association (JRA)



Dirt Grade (Principal Dirt) Race Special Prize

Kane Hekili
(c) Japan Racing Association (JRA)



Special Award

Hospitality
(c) Thoroughbred Pedigree Center



Best Trainer

Masayuki Kawashima
(Funabashi)
(c) Ichikanpo



Best Jockey

Keita Tosaki
(Ohi)
(c) Ichikanpo



Best Female Jockey

Hitomi Miyashita
(Aichi)
(c) Ichikanpo

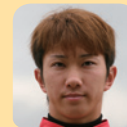


Mai Beppu
(Kochi)
(c) Kochi Racing
Association



Best Apprentice

Shotaro Kawashima
(Funabashi)
(c) Ichikanpo



Fair Play Award for a Jockey

Hiroto Yoshihara
(Kanazawa)
(c) Gifu Prefectural
Racing Association



Special Award

Hideyuki Takaoka
(c) Singapore
Turf Club



Toshio Uchida
(c) Motoyasu
Ushiyama

A Review of JRA Racing & Breeding in Japan for 2008

by Naohiro Goda

The 2008 was not an easy year for many of us all over the world. Although I hate to re-enumerate negative factors, very few of the economic indicators/statistics and the analysis/prospectives published recently by government and private think tanks could encourage us to have a positive outlook for the immediate future.

As the big three car companies have been the focus of attention in U.S.A., the Japanese

people have been shocked to hear the financial report released by the major Japanese motor car companies. Toyota, the world's biggest auto maker, has forecasted the first-ever annual operating loss in its 70-year history, when they cut their group operating forecast to a loss of 150 billion yen. Nissan Motor Company is also likely to fall into the red in fiscal 2008, with group operating loss in the tens of millions of yen. Honda

Motor Company has also cut its outlook. Those car companies have stopped many of their production lines and laid-off thousands of workers.

The Japanese government expects the number of 2009 corporate bankruptcies in Japan will be at the highest level in 30 years and the rate of unemployment will be close to 5.0%. Although this would appear to look better than the situation in the U.S.A., it is

very bad as a standard in Japan.

The horse breeding industry in Japan, most unfortunately, is not an exception to these trends. The statistical report released by Japan Race Horse Registry (JRHR) in December reflected that the total number of foals born in Japan in 2008 was 6,800. It was the first time that the number of foals has fallen to less than 7,000 since 1974, which would indicate that the scale of breeding has been reduced to the level of 34 years ago.

The total annual wagering in 2008 for JRA was 2,750,200,990,400yen, which was 0.3% less than 2007, and the total number of on-course attendance at JRA in 2008 was 7,389,749, or a 1.9% decline when compared with the previous year. Both figures have shown a decline for 11 years in a row and the annual wagering in 2008 was about two thirds of the sales for 1997, when the annual record for wagering was established.

So, both wagering and attendance were not pleasant figures, however, please let me repeat that I hate to dwell on the negative factors, so I am pleased to declare we have been able to find some favorable signs here. When the first half of year ended on the end of June, wagering was 1.9% less than the previous year and the on-course attendance was 4.3% less than the previous year. This obviously means that both wagering and on-course attendance during the second half of year bettered the previous year!

It can be analyzed that there are several factors which are generating a following wind for horseracing. First of all, as the general economy fell seriously, the people tried to tighten their purse strings on money to be spent for amusement. For example, the number of Japanese travelers who spent the New Year holidays at overseas resorts was 4.6% less than the previous year. Many people stayed at home and tried to find fun places close to their home. Perhaps, some of them found the racecourses and off-course betting shops in their hometowns, as the place where they could enjoy their holidays without spending too much money.

Secondly, in 2008, we have finally seen the emergence of a new star in racing, which was been awaited for so long. Kosei Miura, the apprentice jockey who got just got his license in March 2008, won 91 races through the end of year. This was a new record for wins by an apprentice jockey. The previous record was 69, established 21 years ago by Yutaka Take. This made for very big news in Japan as Miura broke the record of Take. All the major nation-wide newspapers reported this feat on the front page with photographs and the TV news shows reported this achievement with prime time coverage. Kosei Miura's name has now been a household name in Japan, and we believe his presence will further encourage the people to come to the racecourses.

Another factor which have fueled the



2008 JRA Best Three-Year-Old Colt, Deep Sky

growth of wagering and attendance was the Emperor's Cup (Autumn G1) on November the 2nd. At this race, two very popular two racehorses had a historic battle, which is now called the "race of decade." It took 15 minutes to decide the winner, because of the very close finish between Vodka and Daiwa Scarlet, both of which are mares born in 2004. The finishing photo showed that Vodka, who had previously won three G1 class races including the Japanese Derby, had beaten Daiwa Scarlet, previous winner of three G1 class races. Daiwa Scarlet would eventually go on to capture the Arima Kinen (G1) in December, again by a "hair." Since this race, we have seen more coverage of racing featured in non-racing major publications and on popular TV shows and it is believed that the dramatic performance in that Emperor's Cup race has spiked the interest of editors and directors to feature more horseracing coverage in their publications and programs.

It is also fortunate that Vodka is still in training for this year and the 19-year-old Kosei Miura has also made a good start for 2009. I therefore believe that 2009 will be the year when JRA's wagering makes its first annual increase since 1997.

There were two important subjects in 2008 from the viewpoint of the internationalization, which I should not forget to mention here. The first one is about the owners' license for residents from outside of Japan. The Japan Racing Association (JRA), the racing authority in Japan, announced in November that JRA would start accepting applications for an owners' license in Japan from persons who reside outside of Japan. The applicants are required to show proof that they own assets, valued at more than 90 million yen in total and an annual income of more than 18 million yen for two consecutive years. These are exactly the same conditions required for Japanese applicants, when they apply for an owners' license.

Additionally, there are several conditions for owners, who reside outside of Japan, yet to be settled. An example is that an owner living outside of Japan must appoint a Japanese person living in Japan as their liaison officer, who can communicate with JRA and the trainers on behalf of the owner. Also foreign resident owners, are encouraged to own the Japanese-bred horses. As an example, the first five horses they own

in Japan must be the Japanese-breds and beyond this, the percentage of foreign-bred horses they can register as racing stock, must be less than one sixth of their total of horses registered to race.

As I mentioned earlier in this column, the breeding industry in Japan has shown a tendency toward a decline. The breeders are now facing their toughest business environment in recent years. It is obvious they need the fresh capital coming into their area. An example of this new money is that more than 5% of the gross sales at the 2008 Japan Racing Horse Association (JRHA) Select July Sale were purchases from foreign sources. I would seriously hope that the new policies of JRA focus on the encouragement of owners and breeders residing outside of Japan, to buy Japanese bred horses to help create the money flow that will be so beneficial to the breeding industry.

It also expected that the first runner which will carry the silks of an owner, who resides outside of Japan, will be seen by the end of 2009.

The 32nd Asian Racing Conference (ARC) was held successfully in Tokyo in November and is another topic in Japan which I must mention here.

It is not just the ARC actually, because I saw in attendance, the many guests from all over the world, who are involved in every aspect of racing and breeding. They came to Tokyo to discuss various subjects, such as medication, synthetic surfaces, the global racing channel, and marketing plans to attract new audiences for horseracing. I believe the plans and schemes talked about at the Tokyo conference will result in having many fruitful achievements in near future.

I believe that 2009 will see some of the leading Japanese runners take their campaign overseas. This spring, Vodka will make the trip to Dubai, where Vodka, who was named the Japanese Horse of the Year, will take aim at the Dubai Duty Free (G1). The summer will likely see Screen Hero, the winner of Japan Cup (G1), in the field of King George at Ascot (G1) and the connections of Deep Sky are very keen to send the Champion 3-y-o Colt to France for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1) this autumn.

2009 should be a year where racing fans of the world will more than ever, have chances to see challengers from Japan running in international races in their own hometowns.



Asian Racing Conference (ARC)

2008 JRA Leading Horses (Top 20, by Total Prize Money)

	Horse	Sex / Age	Sire / Dam	Race Category	Money Earned (JPY)	Principal Wins
1	Deep Sky	C3	Agnes Tachyon / Abi	Flat	534,263,000	NHK Mile Cup / Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) Kobe Shimbun Hai / Mainichi Hai
2	Vodka	F4	Tanino Gimlet / Tanino Sister	Flat	366,568,000	Yasuda Kinen (GI) / Tenno Sho (Autumn) (GI)
3	Screen Hero	C4	Grass Wonder / Running Heroine	Flat	363,127,000	Japan Cup (GI) / Copa Republica Argentina
4	Daiwa Scarlet	F4	Agnes Tachyon / Scarlet Bouquet	Flat	302,074,000	Arima Kinen (GI) / Sankei Osaka Hai (GII)
5	Eishin Deputy	H6	French Deputy / Eishin McAllen	Flat	270,234,000	Takarazuka Kinen (GI) / Kinko Sho (GII) Sports Nippon Sho Kyoto Kimpai (GIII)
6	Sleepless Night	F4	Kurofune / What Katy Did	Flat	242,400,000	Sprinters Stakes (GI) TV Nishinippon Corp. Sho Kitakyushu Kinen / CBC Sho (GIII)
7	Oken Bruce Lee	C3	Jungle Pocket / Silver Joy	Flat	226,753,000	Kikuka Sho (Japanese St.Leger)
8	Admire Monarch	H7	Dream Well / Split the Night	Flat	222,048,000	Nikkei Shinshun Hai (GII) / Diamond Stakes
9	Admire Jupiter	H5	French Deputy / J's Jewelry	Flat	209,774,000	Tenno Sho (Spring) (GI) / Hanshin Daishoten (GII)
10	Fine Grain	H5	Fuji Kiseki / Mill Grain	Flat	196,380,000	Takamatsunomiya Kinen (GI) / Silk Road Stakes (GIII)
11	Matsurida Gogh	H5	Sunday Silence / Paper Rain	Flat	196,196,000	Nikkei Sho (GII) / Sankei Sho All Comers (GII)
12	Reginetta	F3	French Deputy / Aspen Leaf	Flat	196,134,000	Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas)
13	Blumenblatt	M5	Admire Vega / My Wild Flower	Flat	195,403,000	Mile Championship (GI) / Fuchu Himba Stakes (GIII)
14	Meiner Charles	C3	Brian's Time / Meine Pretender	Flat	181,322,000	Hochi Hai Yayoi Sho / Keisei Hai
15	Super Hornet	H5	Rodrigo de Triano / You Sun Polish	Flat	178,008,000	Keio Hai Spring Cup (GII) / Mainichi Okan (GII)
16	Asian Winds	F4	Fuji Kiseki / Sakurasaku	Flat	176,225,000	Victoria Mile
17	Air Shady	H7	Sunday Silence / Air Deja Vu	Flat	174,596,000	American Jockey Club Cup
18	Company	H7	Miracle Admire / Brilliant Very	Flat	174,094,000	Nakayama Kinen (GII) / Yomiuri Milers Cup (GII)
19	Black Emblem	F3	War Emblem / Vin de Noir	Flat	156,809,000	Shuka Sho / Flower Cup
20	King Joy	H6	Marvelous Sunday / Princess Able	Steeplechase	151,252,000	Nakayama Daishogai (J-GI) / Kyoto High-Jump (J-GII)

Japanese Principal Race Results

Japan Autumn International 9th The Japan Cup Dirt (GI)

Hanshin Racecourse, December 7, 2008
 Value of race: ¥253,100,000
 3-year-olds & Up, International,
 1,800m, Dirt Standard, Fine
 1:49:2 (Course record 1:48:5)
 15 runners
 Pari-mutuel handle: ¥24,155,931,200
 On-course 3.6%
 Off-course 96.4%
 Japan Cup Dirt only: ¥16,229,536,700
 Attendance: 48,766
 1st: Kane Hekili (Christophe Lemaire, 57.0kg) ch.h.6,
 Fuji Kiseki - Life Out There by Deputy Minister,
 O-Kaneko Makoto Holdings Co.Ltd.
 T- Katsuhiko Sumii B- Northern Farm,
 Winning money: ¥133,570,000
 2nd: Meisho Tokon (Shinji Fujita, 57.0kg) db.h.6,
 Mayano Top Gun - Lunar Sphere by Jade Robbery
 3rd: Vermilion (Yasunari Iwata, 57.0kg) db.h.6,
 El Condor Pasa - Scarlet Lady by Sunday Silence

60th The Hanshin Juvenile Fillies

Hanshin Racecourse, December 14, 2008
 Value of race: ¥115,840,000
 2-year-olds,
 1,600m, Turf Firm, Fine
 1:35:2 (Course record 1:33:1)
 18 runners
 Pari-mutuel handle: ¥19,929,506,300
 On-course 3.4%
 Off-course 96.6%
 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies only: ¥12,722,943,000
 Attendance: 41,856
 1st: Buena Vista (Katsumi Ando, 54.0kg) db.f.2,
 Special Week - Biwa Heidi by Caerleon,
 O-Sunday Racing Co.Ltd.
 T- Hiroyoshi Matsuda B- Northern Racing,
 Winning money: ¥61,288,000
 2nd: Danon Berbere (Hiroki Goto, 54.0kg) ch.f.2,
 Agnes Tachyon - Miss Berbere by Bering
 3rd: Mikrokosmos (Ryota Sameshima, 54.0kg) b.f.2,
 Neo Universe - Uanme by Marquetry

60th The Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes

Nakayama Racecourse, December 21, 2008
 Value of race: ¥121,540,000
 C&F, 2-year-olds,
 1,600m, Turf Firm, Fine
 1:35:1 (Course record 1:33:4)
 16 runners
 Pari-mutuel handle: ¥19,937,539,600
 On-course 4.9%
 Off-course 95.1%
 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes only: ¥12,409,298,100
 Attendance: 44,708
 1st: Seion Wonder (Yasunari Iwata, 55.0kg) bl.c.2,
 Grass Wonder - Seion Kunoichi by Sunday Silence,
 O-Takao Otani T-Masazo Ryoke B-Yukifumi Tsutsui,
 Winning money: ¥64,218,000
 2nd: Fifth Petal (Christophe Lemaire, 55.0kg) b.c.2,
 King Kamehameha - Lilac Lane by Bahri
 3rd: Break Run Out (Yutaka Take, 55.0kg) b.c.2,
 Smart Strike - Queue by French Deputy

131st The Nakayama Daishogai (J.GI)

Nakayama Racecourse, December 27, 2008
 Value of race: ¥152,830,000
 3-year-olds&Up
 4,100m, Jump Firm, Fine
 4:45:0 (Course record 4:37:2)
 16 runners
 Pari-mutuel handle: ¥9,447,899,800
 On-course 7.4%
 Off-course 92.6%
 The Nakayama Daishogai only: ¥1,868,781,000
 Attendance: 42,874
 1st: King Joy (Jun Takada, 63.0kg) b.h.6,
 Marvelous Sunday - Princess Able by Jade Robbery,
 O-Takao Matsuoka T-Yutaka Masumoto B-Kawakami Bokujo,
 Winning money: ¥80,581,000
 2nd: Merci A Time (Yoshiyuki Yokoyama, 63.0kg) b.h.6,
 Chief Bearhart - Machikane Carmen by Thrill Show
 3rd: T.M Toppazure (Hiroshi Sakuma, 63.0kg) br.h.5,
 T.M. Opera O - T.M. Charmant by Stately Don

53rd The Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix) (GI)

Nakayama Racecourse, December 28, 2008
 Value of race: ¥346,560,000
 3-year-olds & Up, International,
 2,500m, Turf Firm, Fine
 2:31:5 (Course record 2:29:5)
 14 runners
 Pari-mutuel handle: ¥53,014,596,400
 On-course 5.1%
 Off-course 94.9%
 Arima Kinen only: ¥42,867,705,100
 Attendance: 117,093
 1st: Daiwa Scarlet (Katsumi Ando, 55.0kg) ch.f.4,
 Agnes Tachyon - Scarlet Bouquet by Northern Taste,
 O-Keizo Oshiro T- Kunihide Matsuda B- Shadai Farm,
 Winning money: ¥183,192,000
 2nd: Admire Monarch (Yuga Kawada, 57.0kg) b.h.7,
 Dream Well - Split the Night by Tony Bin
 3rd: Air Shady (Hiroki Goto, 57.0kg) ch.h.7,
 Sunday Silence - Air Deja Vu by Northern Taste



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