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Spring 2008 Interview with JRA President and CEO Kenji Tsuchikawa

Looking Ahead to JRA's Bright Future

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Introduction

Kenji Tsuchikawa assumed the post of JRA president and CEO on September 1, 2007. As the first president to rise through JRA's ranks, the great pressure and high expectations of him are not difficult to imagine and one can guess that taking over at the JRA's helm at the start of a period of great change will be demanding.

However, as far as one can tell, the man himself seems poised, and in the many things he has been heard to say on various occasions does not give the impression of being unduly stressed.

Whether that is due to confidence underpinned by a wealth of experience, or his inherent imperturbability, there is no way to tell. However, at the least his composure is unshaken by the vicissitudes that break against it and one certainly has the sense that he is a reliable passenger liner calmly steaming forward toward a bright solid future.

We interviewed the president about various topics today.

level's or position's work responsibilities. That said, I now have also learned that the more your responsibilities increase, the more weight your words carry, so you need to think through the things you say and how you express yourself. Often, words alone do not resound in people's hearts, as they do not convey your own intentions or true meaning as well as your actions or example.

raising the awareness of the role of horses and emphasizing their importance in our culture.

(5) "And on to the future." We are striving to develop horse racing, which has important historical and cultural significance. Together with fans we aim to create Japanese races as an entertainment at international level.

We have also just drafted business targets as part of efforts to achieve these. We have delineated basic and individual goals, which I will describe in detail below.

1. Basic goals

(1) Steady implementation of race events
(2) Increase total attendance (the grand total of track attendance and betting at off-track facilities and via PCs) **and turnover compared to the previous year**

2. Individual goals

(1) Race programs and racehorses
We will endeavor to create race programs that will attract racing fans' interest over the long term. Specifically, while trying to offer races with fields rich in quality that provide the optimum content and number of entrants, we will also attempt to devise event content and races whose composition is positioned to attract strong star horses from within Japan as well as abroad so that JRA's races will become an important stage in determining the world's champion horses. Moreover, while endeavoring to further enhance the quality of racehorses, we want to implement additional measures and focus attention on preventing infectious diseases that might affect events by putting in place more robust quarantine procedures and systems to prevent infectious equine diseases. Among other

Q1 Before getting into this year's plans and policies, we would like to ask you a few questions by way of repeating your introduction. We would like to start by asking how you yourself feel about being the first CEO promoted from within JRA?

A Certainly, there has been a lot of talk about the internal promotion or having risen through the ranks, but it's not something I pay much attention to myself. The only thing I'm thinking about is what needs to be done to make customers happy, starting with what kind of horse racing might be good horse racing.

Q2 You became president in September last year, following a career path that included the posts of director, executive director, and executive vice president, but have there been any changes in you now that your position has changed?

A Regardless of a given position or being named a director, I've always thought of my principles in the following way.

Above all, you need to do the work in front of you to the best of your ability and exert yourself in every assignment within an organization because if you don't, you can't become a leader and tell your subordinates what to do. However, I thought that you probably didn't need to worry when you attain a supervisory position if you had done your best to discharge a given

Q3 Those are words that convey many years of experience and history in JRA, but what kind of year do you think this will be for JRA?

A We have designated 2008, as a 'Year of Change' for the JRA. The newly established Board of Governors recently decided to implement a set of basic management policies as guidelines for the management of JRA operations. Five slogans were set forth for these basic management policies. Let me explain each in a bit more detail.

(1) "Together with customers." We will make an effort to place priority on the customer first and satisfy fans customer satisfaction.

(2) "Together with dreams and thrills." We aim to deliver to racing fans dreams and racing thrills by increasing the appeal of races, with a fusion the dynamism of races, the beauty of horses and the fun of wagering.

(3) "Together with integrity." We will hold races that fans can trust, ensuring that they are conducted with fairness and integrity in safe and pleasant environments.

(4) "Together with society." We will fulfill our responsibilities to society by holding races that are accessible to fans, while at the same time undertaking efforts related to

measures, we will also place emphasis on strengthening stable quarantine procedures and developing appropriate vaccines. In addition, we also want to further improve stable workers' expertise.

(2) Customer services

We will actively implement policies on various customer service measures so that we can meet customers' enjoyment needs as much as possible. For example, we will start with improving services by making every effort to improve the convenience of facilities, ensuring that they are well-maintained, and provide a safe and pleasant spectator environment. We want to place priority on increasing on-course attendance so that more and more people can enjoy the ambience of live racing. In addition, we will endeavor to improve the results of policies and stimulate newsworthiness of horse racing by employing various media such as newsletters and publicity campaigns.

(3) Upholding racing integrity

It goes without saying that because this is the most important factor in organizing races, we will endeavor to maintain scrupulous systems to ensure fairness in racing, so that incidents of cheating such as those involving prohibited substances do not occur. There is no place for foul play in our racing.

(4) Internationalizing horse racing

We are hosting the 32nd Asian Racing Conference (ARC) scheduled between 9th and 14th November, 2008 in Tokyo, and hope that it will be educational, interesting and most of all beneficial to all participating nations. Further, while continuing to promote internationalization in Japan, to produce horses that can compete around the world, the JRA will devote every further effort to ensuring that we are able to contribute to the advancement of international horse racing as a member of global thoroughbred horse racing community.

(5) Other

We will endeavor to promote understanding of equestrian arts and equine culture. We would also like to increase opportunities for Japanese people to come in contact with horses and try horseback riding. Further, we will pay even more attention to environmental issues connected with business activities to fulfill our social responsibilities.

Based on these policies and goals, I hope to work together with JRA's executives and employees toward JRA's advancement this year.

Q4 I just heard you mention the phrase "Board of Governors", but how exactly was this Board of Governors established? Also, what sort of role does it have?

A Amid recent regulatory liberalization trends in Japan, reform of the

Horsereading Law took effect last year. As a part of this law reform, JRA's management and structure was changed to attempt to improve its independence and self-reliance. As a result, it has become possible for the JRA to operate more freely and independently and in the midst of these trends, the Board of Governors was born of the need to reflect external opinions and vitality in JRA's management.

The Board of Governors is composed of seven members, including myself. The other six committee members possess specialized knowledge and are active in the business, legal and journalistic fields and various other sectors. It has the authority to decide upon basic management policy and goal resolutions, operational programs and budgets, and changes in the articles of incorporation of the JRA.

Q5 A new wind is blowing through JRA's organization, isn't it? Will there also be changes in aspects of fan services and publicity activities this year?

A Regarding fan customer services and publicity activities, we hope to explore various measures to satisfy as many people as possible, bearing in mind that JRA is for customers.

For instance, to cite typical examples of fan customer services, from this year we have implemented the "JRA Premium" and "JRA Plus 10" measures to top up bet payoffs.

The "JRA Premium" service enables an actual increase in the prize-to-bet ratio with the addition of the equivalent of five percent of sales proceeds on top of the usual payout amounts in designated JRA races (14 events in 2008, including the Japanese Derby, Arima Kinen (GI), Nakayama Kimpai (GIII) and Kyoto Kimpai (GIII)). The JRA has listened to customers' opinions and has studied methods to increase wager payoff rates for many years, but recent revisions of the law have finally made it possible to achieve this. I should note that this might be referred to as JRA returning profits to customers, because the source of funding for the five percent equivalent is taken out of JRA's profits and earmarked for a special promotion fund.

Although the specific restriction that it must be within the scope of JRA's turnover, the "JRA Plus 10" service applies to all JRA races in principle and involves topping off a wager that ordinarily pays a ¥100 dividend with ¥10. Put differently, it is a service that makes it possible to eliminate the payout of ¥100 for a ¥100 bet when the bet is concentrated on a particular horse. In this regard, it is already being done in many countries overseas and now we can finally implement it this year. I should note that the JRA has already raised the payout ratio by around five percent for win and place bets.

Regarding publicity efforts, our aim is basically similar to last year, to convey the enjoyment of live racing. We want to convey the message that racing is fun to members of generations that have had no particular interest in horse racing up until now. Specifically, we want to develop what we are calling "Club Keiba" (*keiba* means 'horse racing' in Japanese), a campaign with an extremely broad meaning aiming to bring lots of people together to enjoy racing, not only those people who already enjoy racing, but also those who might be thinking of going to give racing a go for the first time. We hope to encourage existing racing fans to bring their friends and buddies to the racecourse and, on the other hand, we hope that people who have yet to try racing will want to *be invited*. We also want to produce and roll out our TV commercials and other ads that promote this concept.

Q6 There certainly is a huge variety of plans for Japan. However, there have been many international exchanges recently and I think that this newsletter's readers are also interested in plans related to other countries and the JRA's plan for internationalization. What about these sorts of things?

A I think that we shouldn't adopt a passive stance regarding internationalization, but rather should actively express our opinions around the world. With that in mind, we plan the following:



(1) Japan became a Part I country in ICS Booklet in 2007. This was a great achievement for Japanese racing, showing that the world racing community had formally recognized our efforts to promote internationalization and improvements in Japanese horse racing. Now that we are in a position to take a leading role in horse racing as one of the advanced racing nations, I believe that we can promote Japan as a racing venue to decide the world's championship horses from here on.

(2) We are expecting around 1,000 people from both Japan and overseas to attend the Asian Racing Conference (ARC) to be held in Tokyo, in November this year. The ARC was established in 1960 in line with JRA and Rangoon Turf Club proposals, the ARC brought together 69 participants at its first meeting that year. The ARC celebrates its 32nd anniversary this year and this will be the fourth conference held in Japan, but the number of ARC participants has increased exponentially in recent years and the ARC has grown to be one of the most international and large-scale conferences in the global racing circle, one where practical topics pertaining to race operations are discussed. As a charter ARC member, Japan naturally has to smoothly implement this conference and make it one that all participants will find very fruitful. Particularly because member nations are widely distributed geographically in Asia, Oceania, the Middle East, and even South Africa, respective nations' horse racing levels and social positions, and history is different. I think, We have to be aware of these differences and be mindful of the needs of small voices in such a gathering. The futures they seek vary widely and generalizations can't be made about specific methods to achieve goals. The ARC's position on the world map has grown and it is a fantastic opportunity to learn, exchange views and foster good relationships among racing nations. I

hope the ARC can be established as a guidepost to world racing, especially to those nations developing racing. The JRA wishes to contribute as a member of Asian and worldwide racing. Moreover, we are reviewing plans that general guests as well as conference participants can enjoy, we anticipate a lot of participation in the event from a wide range of people. Naturally, we also hope that this event will provide an impetus to boost racing in Japan.

(3) From the standpoint of international races, we currently participate in two international series – the Asian Mile Challenge (AMC) and the Global Sprint Challenge (GSC). The GSC will be spreading its wings, with the addition this year of the premier British sprint event, the July Cup, to bring the total of GSC fixtures to eight races, making it an even better series. I believe that these kinds of ties to overseas races and international cooperation between racing clubs are important, as it adds diversity in racing. This will be important from here on and we hope to make an even bigger contribution to the expansion of global racing through these kinds of links. Top class racehorses are the jewels of this sport and we need to work together to better showcase our athletes at world level.

(4) We have moved the Japan Cup Dirt one week back and it will be run over 1,800 meters at Hanshin Racecourse. We have named the four autumn Group

I events, namely the Queen Elizabeth II Commemorative Cup (G1-2,200m, turf, f&m), the Mile Championship (G1-1,600m, turf), the Japan Cup (G1-2,400m, turf), the Japan Cup Dirt (G1-1,800m, dirt), as well as the World Super Jockeys Series – the Japan Autumn International. The four Group One races will provide a total prize money of approximately US\$11 million and additional bonuses of up to US\$1.1 million to the winners of the designated Group One races abroad winning Autumn International Races, and by actively publicizing this in Japan and elsewhere and thus attracting leading horses from around the world to Japan we hope to make Japan's existing GI international events more widely known globally. To that end, I would also like to take this opportunity to definitely encourage invite racing industry representatives worldwide enter their leading horses in this showcase event.

President & CEO Kenji Tsuchikawa, D.V.M.

Joined JRA as clinical veterinarian in 1968. Served successively as general managers of stewards department, general affairs department, and race planning department. Appointed director in September 1999 and executive director in 2003. Promoted to executive vice president in 2004 and appointed president & CEO from September 2007.

NAR Relunched as Regional Joint Corporation, with Kazuo Nakada as New CEO



Mr. Kazuo Nakada

An amendment to Japan's Horse Racing Law, effective January 1, 2008, has relunched the National Association of Racing (NAR), previously a public operated enterprise similar to JRA, into a regional public foundation, which will be operated primarily by local government

racing authorities. Kazuo Nakada, formerly Deputy Manager of the Tokyo Metropolitan Racing Association, was named the new CEO on January 16, 2008. A newly-organized Board of Directors, as shown below, was also named the same day.

Remarks by Kazuo Nakada

NAR is making a new start as a local government public foundation representing horse racing run by local governments nationwide. I, myself, have shifted from representing a single regional government organization in Tokyo, to the greater responsibility of representing horse racing operated by local governments across the entirety of Japan.

Tough conditions continue for local government racing and I hope to exert every effort to make it possible to offer fans an even better quality racing through cooperation of local governments nationwide.

Internationally, I was previously involved in promoting friendly exchanges with Santa Anita Park, Ohi Racecourse's sister track in the U.S., and intend to continue to promote the internationalization of local government racing.

NAR's new board of directors (as of January 16, 2008)

CEO	Kazuo Nakada	Newly-appointed
Vice President	Yoshio Sawai	Newly-appointed
Director	Toshinori Amemiya	
Director	Takeshi Mori	Newly-appointed
Auditor	Motokuni Ishikawa	
Outside auditor	Okitaka Sawamura	Newly-appointed

2007 JRA Awards

Horse of the Year and Best Older Colt or Horse



ADMIRE MOON (JPN)
4-year-old colt, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): End Sweep / My Katies (Sunday Silence)
Owner: Darley Japan Farm Co., Ltd.
Breeder: Northern Farm
Trainer: Hiroyoshi Matsuda
2007 Wins / Starts: 4 / 6 (incl. 1 win

overseas)
Career Wins / Starts: 10 / 17
2007 Earnings: ¥835,183,300
Career Earnings: ¥1,187,727,000
Principal Wins in 2007: Kyoto Kinen (G2), Dubai Duty Free (G1), Takarazuka Kinen (G1), Japan Cup (G1)

Best Two-Year-Old Colt



GOSHAWK KEN (USA)
2-year-old colt, dark bay or brown
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Bernstein / Allthewaybaby (Grand Slam)
Owner: Yoshio Fujita
Breeder: Four Horsemen's Ranch
Trainer: Makoto Saito
2007 Wins / Starts: 2 / 3
Career Wins / Starts: 2 / 3
2007 Earnings: ¥72,976,000
Career Earnings: ¥72,976,000
Principal Win in 2007: Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes

Best Two-Year-Old Filly



TALL POPPY (JPN)
2-year-old filly, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Jungle Pocket / Admire Sunday (Sunday Silence)
Owner: U. Carrot Farm
Breeder: Northern Farm
Trainer: Katsuhiko Sumii
2007 Wins / Starts: 2 / 4
Career Wins / Starts: 2 / 4
2007 Earnings: ¥73,198,000
Career Earnings: ¥73,198,000
Principal Win in 2007: Hanshin Juvenile Fillies

Best Three-Year-Old Colt



ASAKUSA KINGS (JPN)
3-year-old colt, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): White Muzzle / Croupier Star (Sunday Silence)
Owner: Keiko Tahara
Breeder: Shadai Farm
Trainer: Ryuji Okubo
2007 Wins / Starts: 2 / 7
Career Wins / Starts: 4 / 10
Earnings in 2007: ¥288,715,000
Career Earnings: ¥309,097,000
Principal Wins in 2007: Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger)

Best Three-Year-Old Filly and Best Horse by Home-Bred Sire



DAIWA SCARLET (JPN)
3-year-old filly, chestnut
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Agnes Tachyon / Scarlet Bouquet (Northern Taste)
Owner: Keizo Oshiro
Breeder: Shadai Farm
Trainer: Kunihide Matsuda
2007 Wins / Starts: 4 / 7
Career Wins / Starts: 6 / 9
2007 Earnings: ¥461,394,000
Career Earnings: ¥484,611,000
Principal Wins in 2007: Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas), Shuka Sho, Queen Elizabeth II Commemorative Cup (G1)

Best Older Filly or Mare



KOIUTA (JPN)
4-year-old filly, dark chestnut
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Fuji Kiseki / Violet Love (Dr. Devious)
Owner: Maekawa Kikaku Co., Ltd.
Breeder: Shadai Farm
Trainer: Masashi Okuhira
2007 Wins / Starts: 1 / 8
Career Wins / Starts: 5 / 20
2007 Earnings: ¥110,040,000
Career Earnings: ¥236,292,000
Principal Wins in 2007: Victoria Mile

Best Sprinter or Miler



DAIWA MAJOR (JPN)
6-year-old horse, chestnut
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Sunday Silence / Scarlet Bouquet (Northern Taste)
Owner: Keizo Oshiro
Breeder: Shadai Farm
Trainer: Hiroyuki Uehara
2007 Wins / Starts: 2 / 7
Career Wins / Starts: 9 / 28
2007 Earnings: ¥329,134,900
Career Earnings: ¥1,061,810,900
Principal Wins in 2007: Yasuda Kinen (G1), Mile Championship (G1)

Best Dirt Horse



VERMILION (JPN)
5-year-old horse, dark bay or brown
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): El Condor Pasa / Scarlet Lady (Sunday Silence)
Owner: Sunday Racing Co., Ltd.
Breeder: Northern Farm
Trainer: Sei Ishizaka
2007 Wins / Starts: 4 / 5
Career Wins / Starts: 10 / 21
2007 Earnings: ¥409,360,500
Career Earnings: ¥651,569,500
Principal Win in 2007: Japan Cup Dirt (G1)

Best Steeplechase Horse



MERCIA TIME (JPN)
5-year-old horse, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Chief Bearhart / Machikane Carmen (Thrill Show)
Owner: Yasuo Nagai
Breeder: Hiroyuki Tanaka
Trainer: Kohei Take
2007 Wins / Starts: 3 / 5 (3 / 4 ; jump races)
Career Wins / Starts: 6 / 27 (5 / 14; jump races)
2007 Earnings: ¥171,369,000 (¥169,469,000; jump races)
Career Earnings: ¥301,394,000 (¥287,294,000; jump races)
Principal Win in 2007: Nakayama Daishogai

Special Award



VODKA (JPN)
3-year-old filly, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Tanino Gimlet / Tanino Sister (Rousillon)
Owner: Yuzo Tanimizu
Breeder: Country Bokujo
Trainer: Katsuhiko Sumii
2007 Wins / Starts: 3 / 9
Career Wins / Starts: 5 / 11
2007 Earnings: ¥354,620,000
Career Earnings: ¥427,010,000
Principal Win in 2007: Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby)

Special Award



MEISHO SAMSON (JPN)
4-year-old colt, bay
Sire / Dam (Sire of Dam): Opera House / My Vivien (Dancing Brave)
Owner: Yoshio Matsumoto
Breeder: Koki Hayashi
Trainer: Shigetada Takahashi
2007 Wins / Starts: 3 / 6
Career Wins / Starts: 9 / 21
2007 Earnings: ¥453,526,000
Career Earnings: ¥958,185,000
Principal Wins in 2007: Sankei Osaka Hai (G2), Tenno Sho Spring (G1), Tenno Sho Autumn (G1)



**Best Trainer
(Races Won)**
KAZUO FUJISAWA



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



**Best Trainer
(Money Earned,
Training Technique)**
HIROYOSHI MATSUDA



**Best Jockey
(Races Won, Money Earned)
and Special Award**
YUTAKA TAKE



**Best Jockey
(Winning
Average)**
KATSUMI ANDO



**Best Steeplechase
Jockey**
MAKOTO NISHITANI

**Best Jockey
(Newcomer)**
None selected

JRA Equine Cultural Award

"MANDALA OF EQUUS
- Field Science for Wild
Horses, Zebras and Donkeys"
by Rikako Kimura (Tokyo
University Press)

"Outstanding Horseshoeing
Techniques of Soh Nishiuchi
- Charismatic Farrier" by
Tetsu Josaki (Byakuya
Shobo)

NAR Grand Prix 2007



Horse of the Year, Best Thoroughbred 3-Year-Old
Furioso
(c) NAR



Best Thoroughbred 2-Year-Old
Diraquouee
(c) NAR



**Best Thoroughbred (Older Colt or Horse and
Sprinter or Miler)**
Fujino Wave
(c) NAR



Best Thoroughbred Turf Horse
Cosmo Bulk
(c) NAR



Best Thoroughbred Filly or Mare
Tosen Jo O
(c) NAR



Best Ban-ei (Draft) Horse
Tomoe Power
(c) NAR

Best Anglo-Arab Horse
None selected



Special Award
Vermilion
(c) NAR



Special Award
Mill George
(c) Thoroughbred Pedigree Center



Special Award
Wakao Raiden
(c) Thoroughbred Pedigree Center



Best Trainer
Masayuki Kawashima
(Funabashi)
(c) NAR



**Best Jockey, Special
Award**
Hiroyuki Uchida (Ohi)
(c) NAR



Best Female Jockey
Mai Beppu (Kochi)
(c) NAR



**Fair Play Award for a
Jockey**
Isao Sugawara (Iwate)
(c) NAR



**Best Apprentice
Jockey**
Kenichi Nishi (Ban-ei)
(c) Ban-ei Tokachi



Special Award
Toshihiko Kobayashi
(Iwate)
(c) NAR

JRA's 2007 in Review

by Masanori Ariyoshi

The racing of JRA began 2007 with a big gap left by a superstar's departure. This of course, was Deep Impact. The veteran that, true to his name, had such a powerful impact on horse racing in Japan, ended his career after winning the 2006 Arima Kinen.

Deep Impact provided fans continuous racing dreams and thrills from his debut in December of 2004. Undefeated in 2005, he succeeded in taking the Triple Crown with wins in the Satsuki Sho, Japanese Derby, and Kikuka Sho. He carried all of Japan's hopes to France in autumn of 2006. He ran a close third in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (only later be disqualified by a mistake of his handlers and not his ability). He had a career total of 12 victories in 14 races, which brought racing fans happily flocking to the track for every start during his brief two year career.

A record 136,701 spectators gathered at Kyoto Racecourse for the 2005 Kikuka Sho to see him. It normally takes less than 10 minutes to walk to Yodo Station, the nearest train station, but it was so crowded on that day that it took fans more than an hour to reach the station after the race.

Having lost its premier poster attraction, the racing industry had to grapple with the issue of what to do without Deep Impact as it began 2007.

The annual attendance did reach 7,532,111 in 2007, about 30,000 more than 2006, (an increase of 0.3%). This was achieved through a number of new thoroughbred stars, who, although without the strength and individual appeal to equal to Deep Impact, appeared one after another and had enough abundance of character and racing ability to keep drawing fans to the tracks.

Vodka, a three-year-old filly, attracted the most attention from fans. A stretch runner whose sire was 2002 Japanese Derby winner Tanino Gimlet, demonstrated her talent from the time of her debut. A powerful finisher, she began posting winning times equaling the older horses from the age of two.

The favorite at the Oka Sho, she was beaten by Daiwa Scarlet and finished second, but she more than dispelled that humiliation in the Oka Sho at Tokyo

Racecourse in May.

Vodka did not move on to the Oaks after the Oka Sho, as would have been considered normal step, instead she entered the Derby. Her 17 rivals were all colts. Even at that, Vodka was the third favorite for the win pool. She held mid-field through the race and launched an explosive kick down the home stretch. She was on the lead in a flash and finished an overwhelming three-lengths ahead of second place Asakusa Kings. It was an impressive win for only the third filly in history to win the Japanese Derby and the first in 64 years, following Hisatomo in 1937 and Kurifuji in 1943.

Jockey Hirofumi Shii had the reins and happily said, "I feel like it would be just fine to retire right now." As to why he opted for the Derby instead of the Oaks, trainer Katsuhiko Sumii simply explained, "I went for the one that excited me."

She literally flew over the final 600 meters in an estimated 33.0 seconds, which bested Deep Impact's 33.4 seconds in his win two years before.

Vodka was a commanding first in the fans balloting for the starters in the 2007 Arima Kinen. It was the first time in the race's 52-year history that Arima Kinen fans had voted a three-year-old filly into first place. Although she had not won once in four post-Derby starts her popularity among the fans had certainly not flagged.

Meisho Samson also helped to plug the hole left by departed Deep Impact. He captured two crowns with Satsuki Sho and Derby victories in 2006 and when trainer Tsutomu Setoguchi retired, Shigetada Takahashi took over his stall.

He had an easy win in the Sankei Osaka Hai, his first contest as a four-year-old, followed by his third GI victory in the Tenno Sho (Spring). He ended up second in the Takarazuka Kinen, but had a crushing win, when newly paired with jockey Yutaka Take in the Tenno



Vodka, instant star successor following Deep Impact's retirement.

Sho (Autumn) in October. He was only the fourth horse in history to achieve consecutive spring and fall Tenno Sho trophies.

Admire Moon, a four-year-old like Meisho Samson, was among the horses that achieved the most growth in 2007. Fourth in the Satsuki Sho in the spring of his third year and seventh in the Derby, he was unable to stand among the leaders, but increased his power from the fall onward with a win in the Sapporo Kinen.

He traveled to the UAE after cruising to victory in the Kyoto Kinen at the start of 2007. He achieved his first GI crown by besting Linngari and the rest of the field in the Dubai Duty Free. Stopping next in Hong Kong, he ran third in the Audemars Piguet Queen Elizabeth II Cup. He then bested Meisho Samson and Vodka in the Takarazuka Kinen, his first race after returning to Japan, to acquire his first Japanese GI title.

Admire Moon also made news off the track. A mid-career sale, which is highly unusual in Japan, was concluded in July, following his Takarazuka Kinen win. Darley Japan Farm became his new owner by purchasing him from original owner Riichi Kondo for an estimated four billion yen.

The "new incarnation" of Admire Moon kicked off with the Tenno Sho (Autumn). He finished sixth due to interference down the home stretch in that race, but quickly took the lead in the subsequent Japan Cup, pulling off a marvelous win with a successively executed aggressive strategy. Retired after his final career victory in the Japan Cup, Admire Moon is now doing stud duties for Darley Japan. Also chosen 2007, JRA Horse of the Year, he is said

to have received many requests for his services. His stud fee is reported at five million yen. This does not match Deep Impact's 12 million, but there are also high expectations for Admire Moon, to challenge the performance records of the late End Sweep.

Along with the appearance of new star horses vying to take Deep Impact's place, 2007 was a year that saw the unwelcome appearance of equine influenza.

The first equine flu outbreak was confirmed at JRA's Miho Training Center in Ibaraki on August 15. It had been 35 years since equine flu had last been confirmed in Japan during a widespread outbreak that occurred in 1972.

The next day, examinations revealed infected 29 horses. Determining that the contagion's spread was not a limited one, JRA elected to cancel the races scheduled for the 17th and 18th in Sapporo, Niigata, and Kokura. Cancellations also extended to nationwide local government races and all equestrian competitions.

Japan was hard-hit by the major outbreak 35 years ago and racing industry representatives subsequently mandated that all racehorses be vaccinated as a countermeasure. As such, horses in many cases appeared outwardly healthy even when testing positive upon examination in this outbreak. The vaccine had been

effective in suppressing symptoms.

Since the beginning of 2008, with sporadic occurrences, equine influenza continues to have some repercussions, but it is probably safe to say that the damage has been kept to a minimum.

The aftereffects of equine flu had yet to subside on September the 1st of 2007, when Dr. Kenji Tsuchikawa was appointed JRA's 14th President and CEO. JRA Presidents have customarily been former top bureaucrats of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Japan up to now, but Dr. Tsuchikawa is the first to have risen through the JRA ranks internally since JRA's founding in 1954, making him a born and bred CEO.

A JRA Premium offered from the opening day of 2008, was one of the first phases of JRA's reform strategies. The JRA Premium is a fan service that involves adding five percent of JRA's proceeds from 14 designated races to payments on winning bets.

A certain additional percentage can be expected on top of

the usual payment. The effects of the JRA Premium were clearly apparent in turnover. Among the eligible races, the Nakayama Kimpai earned ¥8.09 billion and the Kyoto Kimpai ¥8.52 billion. This was an increase of 23% over the year before for the Nakayama Kimpai and 19% for the Kyoto Kimpai.

Although 2007 had some negative elements such as Deep Impact's retirement and the equine flu outbreak, it was also a year in which new things were gained. There is no mistaking that it will be remembered as a year that was a major turning point not just for 2008, but for years into the future.



Deep Impact, the horse that became a national idol in Japan in 2006. There are high hopes for his future as a sire.

Japanese Principal Race Results

59th The Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes

Nakayama Racecourse, December 9, 2007

Value of race: ¥115,680,000

C&F, 2-year-olds,

1,600m, Turf Firm, Fine

1:33:5 (Course record 1:33:4)

16 runners

Pari-mutuel handle: ¥20,170,082,700

On-course 5.1%

Off-course 94.9%

Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes only: ¥12,981,818,500

Attendance: 45,768

1st: Goshawk Ken (Masaki Katsuura, 55.0kg) Db.c.2,

Bernstein – Allthewaybaby by Grand Slam,

O-Y. Fujita T-Makoto Saito B-Four Horsemen's Ranch,

Winning money: ¥61,176,000

2nd: Let's Go Kirishima (Hideaki Miyuki, 55.0kg) b.c.2,

Mejiro Ryan – Marushin Amon by Baillamont

3rd: Captain Thule (Yuga Kawada, 55.0kg) Gr.c.2,

Agnes Tachyon – Air Thule by Tony Bin

52nd The Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix) (GI)

Nakayama Racecourse, December 23, 2007

Value of race: ¥347,100,000

3-year-olds & Up, International,

2,500m, Turf Good, Fine

2:33:6 (Course record 2:29:5)

15 runners

Pari-mutuel handle: ¥53,857,752,200

On-course 4.7%

Off-course 95.3%

Arima Kinen only: ¥45,200,010,400

Attendance: 110,363

1st: Maturida Gogh (Masayoshi Ebina, 57.0kg) b.c.4,

Sunday Silence – Paper Rain by Bel Bolide,

O-Fumie Takahashi T-Sakae Kunieda B-Okada Stud,

Winning money: ¥183,570,000

2nd: Daiwa Scarlet (Katsumi Ando, 53.0kg) ch.f.3,

Agnes Tachyon – Scarlet Bouquet by Northern Taste

3rd: Daiwa Major (Mirco Demuro, 57.0kg) ch.h.6,

Sunday Silence – Scarlet Bouquet by Northern Taste



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