Guidebook for Export to Japan 2011

<Interior Goods (Tableware, etc.)>

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)
Development Cooperation Division
Trade and Economic Cooperation Department

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Interior Goods (Tableware, etc.)

In Japan, a so-called "zakka (various household goods) boom" began in the late 1990s. Since then, a number of interior goods shops (or houseware shops) have appeared to great popularity; such shops offer a wide variety of products ranging from kitchenware and flatware/tableware to furniture, clothing and accessories, and stationery under such themes as "simple and modern," "Japanese modern," and "exotic."

Among various interior goods, this report covers groups of products that are typically handled at such interior goods shops with a focus on commonly-used products made of plastic, wooden, ceramic, glass, and metal.

Scope of coverage

Item	Definition	HS Code
Tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and hygienic or toilet articles, of plastics	Tableware and kitchenware Other	3924.10.000 3924.90
Other articles of plastics	Statuettes and other ornamental articles	3926.40.000
Tableware and kitchenware, of wood.	Other than Waribashi	4419.00.900
Tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and toilet articles, of porcelain or china	Tableware and kitchenware Other Ceramic tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and toilet articles, other than of porcelain or china.	6911.10.000 6911.90.000 6912.00.000
Statuettes and other ornamental ceramic articles.	Of porcelain or china Other	6913.10.000 6913.90.000
Glassware of a kind used for table, kitchen, toilet, office, indoor decoration or similar purposes	-	7013
Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof	Of cast iron, not enamelled Of cast iron, enamelled Of stainless steel Of copper Of aluminum	7323.91.000 7323.92.000 7323.93.000 7418.19.000 7615.19.000

1. Points to Note in Exports to and Sales in Japan

(1) Import Regulation and Procedures

Of interior goods, imported tableware and kitchenware are subject to the Food Sanitation Act.

・Food Sanitation Act

The Food Sanitation Act prohibits the importation of apparatus and container-packages that contain or have attached to them toxic or harmful substances that pose a threat to human health. Importers of tableware and kitchenware are required to submit the completed "Notification Form for Importation of Food, etc.," along with other required documents to the Quarantine Station at the port of entry. A decision is then made based on an examination of the documents to see whether or not an inspection at the bonded area is required.

Metal cookware is subject to the lead content standards, while glass, porcelain and ceramic, plastic tableware and cookware are subject to lead and cadmium leaching standards. Sanitary examination is imposed on all glassware products including those made of lead crystal. Separate testing of coloring agents is required for colored tableware.

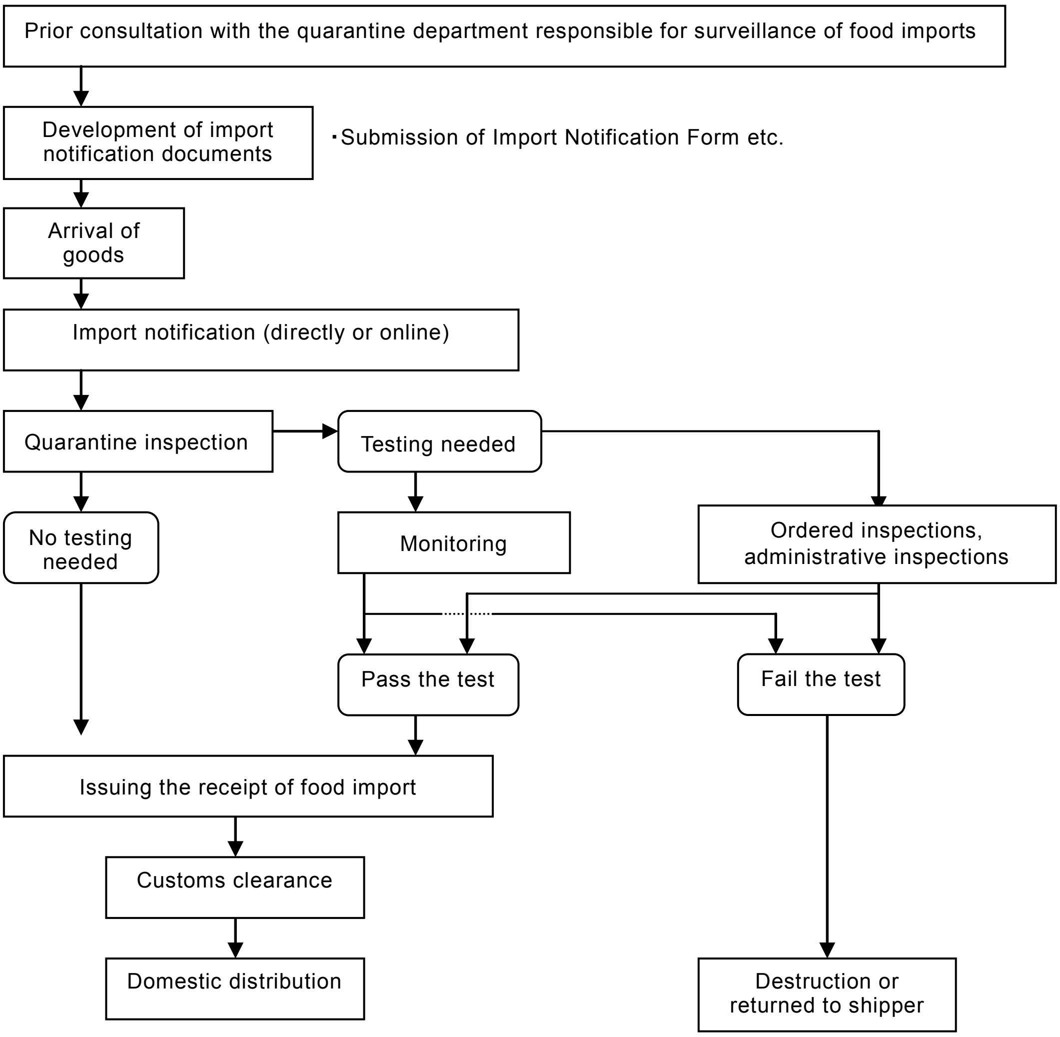
a. For metal portions that come into direct contact with food

1. The structure must not permit copper, lead or alloys of these substances to shear off.
2. The plating must not have a lead content of 5 % or greater.
3. They must not be manufactured or repaired with instruments with 10% or higher lead content or 5% or higher antimony content.
4. Solder used for manufacturing or repair must not have a lead content of 20% or greater.

5. All copper or copper alloy apparatus and container-packages must have the portion that comes in contact with food covered with tin plating, silver plating or other plating designed to keep the food safe. However, substances that have a distinctive shine and are not rusted need not meet this requirement.

b. Plastic portions that come into direct contact with food must not contain lead or cadmium.

Fig. 1 Procedures required under the Food Sanitation Act



Prior to importing, the importer may take a sample of forthcoming imports to laboratories registered with the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare or to the competent government agency of the exporting countries. Those test results may be substituted for the corresponding inspection at the port of entry, which expedites the quarantine clearance process.

If the prospective importers intend to repeatedly import the same cookware product of aluminum, stainless steel or plain glass, by filing the "Notification Form initial importation, of Food, etc.," inspection result statement, and import plan statement at the time of the initial importation, the importer does not need to file an import notification each time for a certain period (three years, in principle). When products with no history of violations in the past three years are imported, the importer may be exempt from import notifications at each subsequent case of importation for one or three years (referred to as the planned import system) if they submit the import plan or other similar documents.

Among interior goods, products other than tableware and kitchenware vary widely in the material used, shape, and usage, and different restrictions may apply to imports; some may be subject to restrictions under the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), for which care should be taken.

(2) Regulations and Procedural Requirements at the Time of Sale

Importing interior goods under different product categories is subject to the Food Sanitation Act, the Household Goods Quality Labeling Act, and the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations. Products that infringe intellectual property rights are regulated by the various intellectual property laws (Trademark Act, Patent Act, Unfair Competition Prevention Act, etc.). Prospective importers must be aware of these considerations, as rights holders may initiate legal action.

In addition, web-based mail-order service and specified commercial transactions are subject to provisions of the Act on Specified Commercial Transactions. Containers and packaging may also be subject to identifier labeling provisions of the Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources, and recycling provisions of the Act on the Promotion of Sorted Garbage Collection and Recycling of Containers and Packaging (certain small-scale providers are exempt from regulation).

･Food Sanitation Act

For tableware and kitchenware, the Food Sanitation Act prohibits the sale and use of apparatus and container-packages that pose a potential threat to the human health. The distribution stage is also subject to oversight and guidance by food sanitation inspectors from local government health centers.

･Household Goods Quality Labeling Act

The Act stipulates the format and content of quality labeling for products designed for everyday household use. The purpose is to protect consumer benefits by providing information that helps them choose products and informs them about how to use the products correctly. Tableware and kitchenware made of heat-resistant glass, reinforced glass, synthetic resin (plastic), wood and synthetic resin that are coated with lacquer or cashew gum coating material, must display in their labeling specific items of information stipulated by the Miscellaneous Industrial Products Quality Labeling Standards and the Synthetic Resin Products Quality Labeling Standards under the Household Goods Quality Labeling Act.

･Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations

The Act prohibits a form of improper labeling that exaggerates or falsifies labeling and misleads consumers about the nature or quality of products. Importers or resellers are required to submit reasonable grounds to prove that the labeling is not “improper.” If they are unable to do so, those claims are considered as a form of improper labeling. Vague or confusing labeling that makes it difficult to discern the actual country of origin is also prohibited as a form of importer labeling.

･Act on Specified Commercial Transactions

Selling "specified products, rights, or service" to general consumers through "specified commercial transactions" such as mail-order services and door-to-door sales is subject to the laws concerning specified commercial transactions. The commercial transactions specified under the Act include: (1) door-to-door sales, (2) mail order sales, (3) telemarketing sales, (4) chain sales (network-based marketing using word-of-mouth and pyramid selling), (5) specific continuous service provision transactions, and (6) sales transactions offering business opportunities. Mail order sales include Internet sales and commercial advertisement by e-mail. In order to provide consumers with accurate information, in mail order sales, operators are required to list the following information in their advertisements: (1) sales price, (2) payment period and method, (3) delivery date, (4) clauses related to the return system, (5) name, address and telephone number of operator. The Act also prohibits advertising containing false or exaggerated statements.

(3) Contacts of Competent Authorities

Fig. 2 Contacts of competent authorities

Related regulations and control	Competent agencies	Contact/Website
Food Sanitation Act	Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Food Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	TEL: +81-3-5253-1111 http://www.mhlw.go.jp
Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act	Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	TEL: +81-3-3501-1511 http://www.meti.go.jp
Act on Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	Wildlife Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment	TEL: +81-3-3581-3351 http://www.env.go.jp
Household Goods Quality Labeling Act	Office responsible for household goods quality labeling, Consumer Related Trade Division, Trade Practices Department, Fair Trade Commission of Japan	TEL: +81-3-3507-8800 http://www.caa.go.jp
Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations	Consumer Related Trade Division, Trade Practices Department, Fair Trade Commission of Japan	TEL: +81-3-3507-8800 http://www.caa.go.jp
Act on Specified Commercial Transactions	Consumer Related Trade Division, Trade Practices Department, Fair Trade Commission of Japan	TEL: +81-3-3501-1511 http://www.meti.go.jp
Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources/Act on the Promotion of Sorted Garbage Collection and Recycling of Containers and Packaging	Recycling Promotion Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	TEL: +81-3-3501-1511 http://www.meti.go.jp
	Office of Recycling Promotion, Policy Planning Division, Waste Management and Recycling Department, Ministry of the Environment	TEL: +81-3-3581-3351 http://www.env.go.jp

2. Labeling

(1) Labeling under Legal Regulations

Labeling under Household Goods Quality Labeling Act

Details of labeling and other relevant requirements for interior goods in the tableware and kitchenware category listed below are specified according to the Miscellaneous Industrial Products Quality Labeling Standards and the Synthetic Resin Products Quality labeling Standards under the Household Goods Quality Labeling Act.

Fig 3. Required labeling items under the Household Goods Quality Labeling Act

Item	Labeling requirements
Containers that do not require labeling of capacity such as plates, bowls, cups, sealed containers for food, lunchboxes, bread case, of synthetic resin	1) Raw material resin, 2) Heat-resistant temperature, 3) Precautions on handing, 4)Name of the labeler and information contact (address or telephone number)
Utensils of synthetic resin for dining, table or kitchen use excluding cutting board and utensils for ice making	1) Raw material resin, 2) Heat-resistant temperature, 3) Name of the labeler and information contact (address or telephone number)
Utensils for dining, table, or kitchen use, made of wood and synthetic resin that are coated with lacquer or cashew gum coating materials	1) Product name, 2) Type of surface painting, 3) Type of substrate surface, 4) Precautions on usage, 5) Name of the labeler and information contact (address or telephone number)
Reinforced glassware for dining, table or kitchen use	1) Product name, 2) Type of reinforcement, 3) Precautions on usage, 4) Name of the labeler and information contact (address or telephone number)
Utensils for dining, table, or kitchen use made of borosilicate glass or glass-ceramics	1) Product name, 2) Usage classification, 3) Maximum heat-resistant temperature difference, 4) Precautions on usage, 5) Name of the labeler and information contact (address or telephone number)
Cookware (made of aluminum, enameled cast iron, stainless steel, and copper, with a capacity of no greater than 10 liters and no built-in heating apparatus)	1) Surface processing (only when applicable), 2) Type of material, 3) Dimensions, 4) Capacity when full, 5) Precautions on usage, 6) Name of the labeler and information contact (address or telephone number)
Teakettles (made of aluminum, enameled cast iron, stainless steel, and copper, with a capacity of no greater than 10 liters)	1) Surface processing (only when applicable), 2) Type of material, 3) Dimensions, 4) Precautions on usage, 5) Name of the labeler and information contact (address or telephone number)

Labeling under Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources

Under the Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources, specific containers and packaging are subject to identifier labeling provisions, in order to promote sorted collection. When paper or plastic is used as a packaging material for wrapping of individual product items, or for labels, external packaging or elsewhere, a material identifier mark must be displayed on at least one spot on the side of the container with information where the material is used.

[Representation example]

External packaging

Individual packaging

(2) Labeling under Industry-level Voluntary Restraint

Labeling in compliance with the heat-resistant glass/hardened glass requirement compulsory certification program

The Glass Manufacturers Association of Japan allows heat-resistant glass tableware that is manufactured by its member companies that have a certain size of facilities and in production processes that meet certain requirements to bear the Glass Manufacturers Association of Japan Heat-Resistant Glass Mark, upon checking the product materials and process management. Products certified to bear the Heat-Resistant Glass Mark are also allowed to bear the Hardened Glass Lid Mark.

*Contact: The Glass Manufacturers Association of Japan Tel: +81-3-5937-5861 http://www.glassman.or.jp

[Heat-resistant glass mark]

[Hardened glass lid mark]

3. Taxation System

(1) Tariff Duties

Of interior goods, the rates of tariff duties on major product groups of plastic, wooden, ceramic, glass, and metal products are shown in the table below.

In order to be eligible for benefits of preferential tariffs from one of the countries with which Japan has a preferential trading agreement, one is required to submit a Generalized System of Preferences Form A issued by the customs or other competent authorities from the country involved (except where the total value of imports is 200,000 yen or lower). Details may be checked with the Customs and Tariff Bureau of the Ministry of Finance. If one wishes to check the tariff classifications or tariff rates in advance, it may be convenient to use the prior instruction system in which one can make inquiries and receive replies in person, in writing, or via e-mail.

(Japan Customs: http://www.customs.go.jp/english/index.htm)

Fig. 4 Tariff duties on interior goods

HS Code.		Description	Rate of duty				
			General	Temporary	WTO	Preferential	Special preferential
3924		Tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and hygienic or toilet articles, of plastics					
3924.10	000	Tableware and kitchenware	5.8%		3.9%	Free	
3924.90		Other	5.8%		3.9%	Free	
	010	Hygienic or toilet articles					
	090	Other					
3926		Other articles of plastics					
3926.40	000	Statuettes and other ornamental articles	5.8%		4.8%	Free	
4419							
4419.00		Tableware and kitchenware, of wood					
	900	Other (Other than Waribashi)	3.2%		2.7%	Free	
6911		Tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and toilet articles, of porcelain or china					
6911.10	000	Tableware and kitchenware	3.4%		2.3%	Free	
6911.90	000	Other	3.4%		2.3%	Free	
6912							
6912.00	000	Ceramic tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and toilet articles, other than of porcelain or china	3.4%		2.3%	Free	
6913		Statuettes and other ornamental ceramic articles					
6913.10	000	Of porcelain or china	3.4%		2.3%	Free	
6913.90	000	Other	3.4%		2.3%	Free	
7013		Glassware of a kind used for table, kitchen, toilet, office, indoor decoration or similar purposes (other than that of heading 70.10 or 70.18)					
7013.10	000	Of glass-ceramics	4.6%		3.1%	Free	
		Stemware drinking glasses, other than of glass-ceramics:					
7013.22	000	Of lead crystal	4.6%		3.1%	Free	
7013.28	000	Other	4.6%		3.1%	Free	
		Other drinking glasses, other than of glass ceramics:					
7013.33	000	Of lead crystal	4.6%		3.1%	Free	
7013.37	000	Other	4.6%		3.1%	Free	
		Glassware of a kind used for table (other than drinking glasses) or kitchen purposes, other than of glass-ceramics:					
7013.41	000	Of lead crystal	5.8%		3.9%	Free	
7013.42	000	Of glass having a linear coefficient of expansion not exceeding 5 x 10-6 per Kelvin within a temperature range of 0°C to 300°C	5.8%		3.9%	Free	
7013.49	000	Other	5.8%		3.9%	Free	
		Other glassware:					
7013.91	000	Of lead crystal	5.8%		3.9%	Free	
7013.99	000	Other	5.8%		3.9%	Free	
7323		Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, of iron or steel, iron or steel wool, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like, of iron or steel					
7323.91	000	Of cast iron, not enamelled	Free		Free		
7323.92	000	Of cast iron, enamelled	Free		Free		
7323.93	000	Of stainless steel	Free		Free		
7418		Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, of copper, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like, of copper, sanitary ware and parts thereof, of copper; Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like, of copper					
7418.19	000	Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, of copper, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like, excluding table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like	Free		Free		
7615		Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, of aluminum, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like, of aluminum, sanitary ware and parts thereof, of aluminum; Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like, of aluminum	Free		Free		
7615.19	000	Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, of copper, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like, excluding table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof, pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like	Free		Free		

Note 1: Special preferential rate is applicable only for the Least Developed Countries.

Note 2: Normally the order of precedence for application of tariff rates is Preferential, WTO, Temporary, and General, in that order. However, Preferential rates are only eligible when conditions stipulated by law or regulations are met. WTO rates apply when those rates are lower than Temporary or General rates. Refer to "Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan" (by Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance) for a more complete interpretation of the tariff table and for more details on economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with each country.

(2) Consumption Tax

(CIF + Tariff duties) × 5%

4. Trade Trends

(1) Changes in Imports

<Import trends by item>

Imports of plastic tableware saw an increase from 2006 to 2010, with the quantities of imports in 2010 being 124,008 tons and the value of imports being 71,166 million yen, or 114.7% and 114.5% of the figures for 2006, respectively. The steady increase in imports of products for household use, in particular, was the driving force in the overall increase in imports, and it is suggested that imports of plastic tableware other than tableware and kitchenware - bath supplies, toiletries, and stationery, for instance - have been increasing.

As for ceramic tableware, the constant large decrease up to 2009 has resulted in the 2010 figures being significantly lower compared to those for 2006, despite a slight increase in 2010. Imports of ceramic ware, in particular, dropped substantially, with imports being 36,919 tons in quantity and 11,535 million yen by value, or 62.1% and 66.5% of the 2006 figures, respectively.

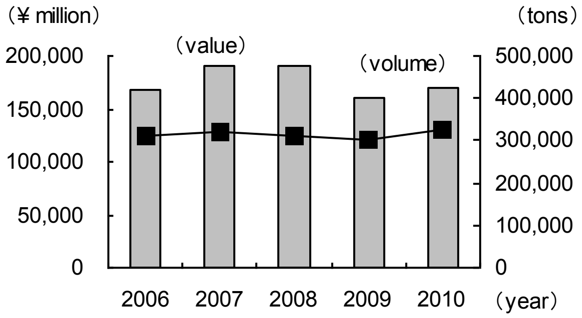
Imports have also significantly been decreasing for glass tableware in recent years. The imports in 2010 were 40,287 tons in quantity and 16,805 million yen by value, or 83.7% and 67.6% of the figures in 2007, respectively, with the drop in value of imports particularly large. This was due to several factors including a decline in imports of lead glass tableware (crystal glass) that is known as fine glass, for which imports have generally been steady in the past. This is in contrast to the rising imports in less expensive glass tableware. Another factor was the decline in import unit values under the influence of a recently strong yen (i.e. weak euro), as glass tableware is largely imported from Europe.

Fig. 5 Changes in interior goods imports

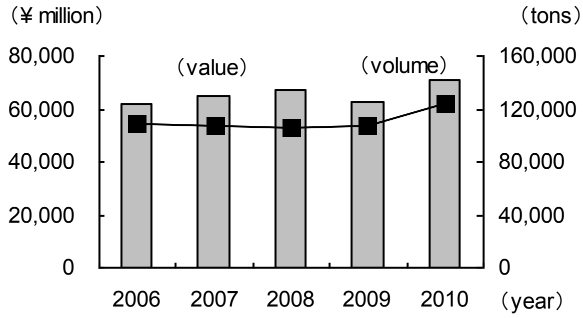
Item	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value
Tableware, kitchenware	38,819	19,615	37,716	21,069	36,929	21,202	36,935	20,279	44,411	25,988
Toilet	6,436	3,845	5,885	3,898	5,560	3,803	5,540	3,369	5,885	3,332
Household articles	50,751	18,630	52,025	20,705	53,216	23,589	56,086	22,749	63,960	24,883
Statuettes and other ornamental articles	12,127	20,057	11,154	19,606	10,193	18,874	8,621	15,952	9,752	16,963
Of plastic, total	108,133	62,147	106,781	65,278	105,898	67,468	107,182	62,349	124,008	71,166
Of wood, total	–	–	–	–	10,325	5,909	9,262	4,992	8,123	4,342
Of porcelain	44,455	20,100	43,642	20,883	35,896	17,957	37,539	14,082	38,323	14,555
Of China	59,428	17,358	45,939	16,493	36,837	13,068	32,716	10,599	36,919	11,535
Of porcelain & china, total	103,884	37,457	89,581	37,377	72,732	31,025	70,255	24,682	75,243	26,090
Glass-ceramics	89	53	230	126	135	63	104	45	95	55
Cups, glassware (lead crystal)	–	–	1,163	4,059	928	3,484	538	2,289	509	2,359
Cups, glassware (other)	–	–	11,521	5,190	10,663	4,612	8,969	3,255	9,113	3,433
Tableware, kitchenware (lead crystal)	–	–	116	280	80	206	42	122	76	163
Tableware, kitchenware (other)	–	–	19,322	5,940	17,149	5,915	15,610	4,996	17,767	5,420
Other (lead crystal)	879	2,682	912	2,653	638	2,036	292	1,224	289	1,101
Other (other)	15,606	6,645	14,848	6,595	15,357	6,126	13,311	4,721	12,438	4,274
Total glassware	–	–	48,111	24,843	44,948	22,442	38,866	16,652	40,287	16,805
Tableware, kitchenware (cast iron)	4,510	2,864	4,557	2,763	4,256	2,726	2,854	1,682	3,056	1,949
Tableware, kitchenware (stainless steel)	41,500	29,178	35,883	29,376	34,972	28,413	33,664	24,115	34,788	23,340
Tableware, kitchenware (copper)	122	214	98	216	65	133	39	115	32	93
Tableware, kitchenware (aluminum)	37,200	26,096	37,993	29,848	40,419	31,858	39,042	26,100	39,717	25,659
Of metal total	83,332	58,352	78,530	62,203	79,712	63,130	75,598	52,011	77,593	51,042
Total	311,922	167,336	323,002	189,700	313,616	189,974	301,163	160,686	325,254	169,444

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)
Note 1: Total is not always the simple sum for each column due to rounding.
Note 2: Figures are not available for several items in 2006 and 2007 because the scope of HS codes was modified in 2007.
Note 3: Wooden tableware refers to "Tableware, kitchenware," excluding Waribashi.

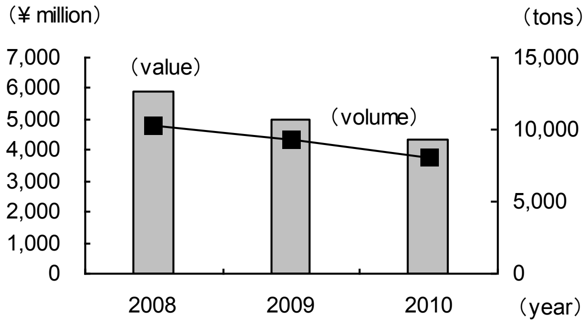
[Total]



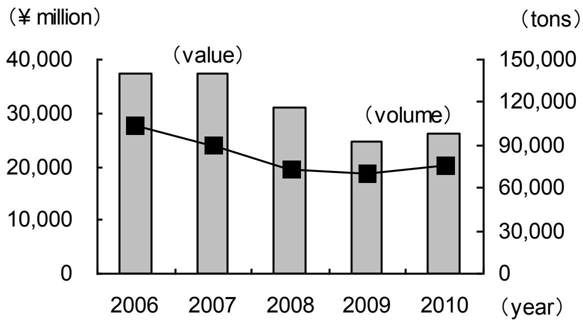
[Of plastic]



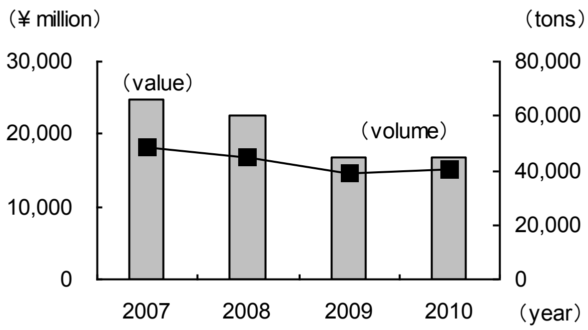
[Of wood]



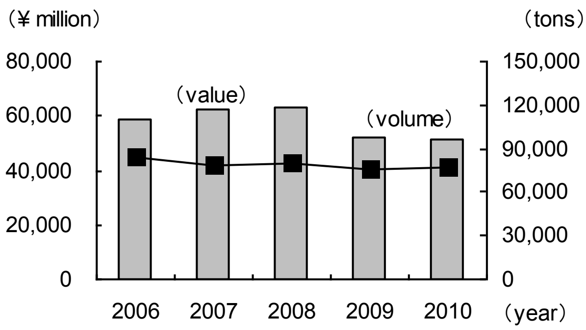
[Of porcelain and china]



[Of glass]



[Of metal]



Imports of metal tableware saw a declining trend from 2006 to 2010, with the 2010 imports being 77,593 tons in quantity and 51,042 million yen by value, or 93.1% and 87.5% of the 2006 figures, respectively. The only exception was aluminum-made tableware and kitchenware, which experienced a steady rise in imports with 39,717 tons and 25,659 million yen in 2010, or 106.8% and 98.3% of the 2006 figures, respectively, showing particularly high demand for aluminum-made products among the metal tableware and kitchenware category.

<Import trends by country/region>

[Plastic tableware]

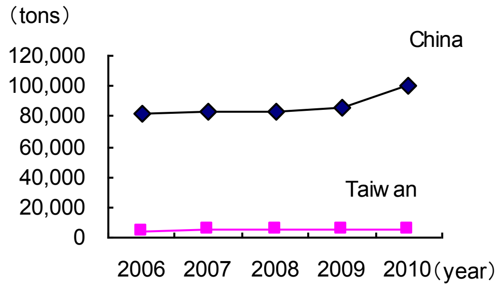
For plastic tableware, those from China accounted for approximately 80% of the total in 2010 in both quantity and by value, followed by other Asian countries, namely Taiwan, the Republic of Korea, and Vietnam, suggesting that the place or origin in this category is essentially Asia.

Among different items, a large part of imports of plastic tableware for household use, small statues and other accessories made using plastics come from China, although it accounts for a small percentage in total tableware and kitchenware imports. Plastic tableware for cosmetics, for which Spain and Korea has a relatively large share as the second largest imports origin. Imports from Spain and Korea are characterized by their unit values typically several times higher than those of Chinese imports.

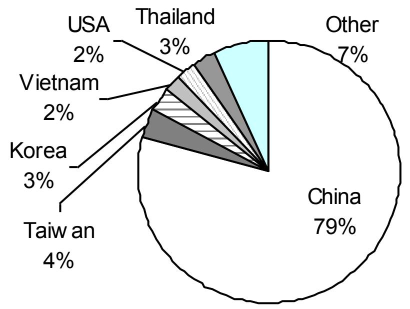
Volumes of imports of the plastic tableware from Africa are negligible.

Fig. 6 Principal places of origin of plastic tableware

[Trends in imports of leading exporters]



[Share of importers in 2010 (value basis)]



Country	2006	2007	2008	2009		2010				
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Value	Volume		Value		Average unit price
China	82,221	83,143	83,667	85,058	49,442	99,827	80.5%	56,252	79.0%	563
Taiwan	4,517	4,968	4,981	4,994	2,651	5,016	4.0%	2,634	3.7%	525
Korea	5,321	4,390	3,538	2,983	1,930	3,444	2.8%	2,115	3.0%	614
Vietnam	2,331	2,223	2,210	2,470	1,099	3,351	2.7%	1,477	2.1%	441
USA	5,398	3,836	3,664	3,408	1,681	3,303	2.7%	1,729	2.4%	523
Thailand	3,210	2,607	2,689	2,642	1,697	2,945	2.4%	2,073	2.9%	704
Other	5,136	5,613	5,150	5,628	3,847	6,123	4.9%	4,887	6.9%	798
Total	108,133	106,781	105,898	107,182	62,349	124,008	100.0%	71,166	100.0%	574

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg   Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

Note: Total is not always the simple sum for each column due to rounding.

Item	First place				Second place			
	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price
Tableware, kitchenware	China	18,291	70.4%	560	Spain	1,408	5.4%	2,775
Toilet	China	2,215	66.5%	488	Korea	431	12.9%	1,614
Household articles	China	19,905	80.0%	372	Vietnam	799	3.2%	340
Statuettes and other ornamental articles	China	15,841	93.4%	1,728	Vietnam	404	2.4%	2,491

Units: value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg   Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

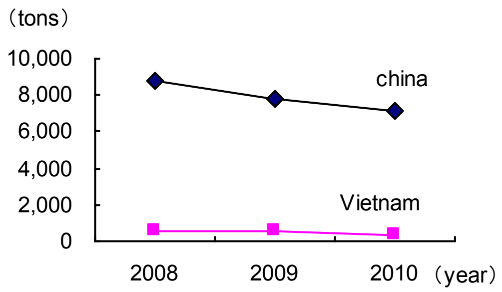
[Wooden tableware]

Over 80% of imports of wooden tableware come from China, followed by other Asian countries, namely Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia.

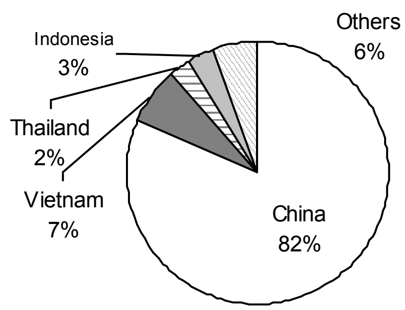
Volumes of imports from Africa are negligible for the wooden tableware.

Fig. 7 Principal places of origin of wooden tableware

[Trends in import value by leading exporters]



[Share of importers in 2010 (value basis)]



Country	2006	2007	2008	2009		2010				
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Value	Volume		Value		Average unit price
China	—	—	8,832	7,829	3,995	7,189	88.5%	3,545	81.7%	493
Vietnam	—	—	579	565	452	356	4.4%	301	6.9%	845
Thailand	—	—	315	313	127	208	2.6%	107	2.5%	513
Indonesia	—	—	300	331	177	161	2.0%	149	3.4%	928
Others	—	—	298	224	242	209	2.6%	239	5.5%	1,143
Total	—	—	10,325	9,262	4,992	8,123	100.0%	4,342	100.0%	534

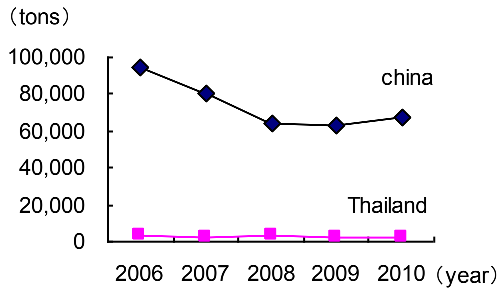
Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)
Note 1: Total is not always the simple sum for each column due to rounding.
Note 2: Figures for 2006 and 2007 are not included in the table because of alterations to the scope of HS codes in 2007..

[Ceramic tableware]

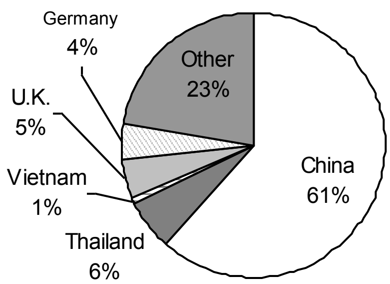
For ceramic tableware, China was the country with the largest import in terms of quantity, followed by other Asian countries namely Thailand and Vietnam. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain, on the other hand, ranked among the top countries of origin of imports in terms of value, despite that they did not have very large percentages in terms of import quantity. This is explained by the large quantity of imports of brand-name ceramic tableware such as those of Wedgwood, Maissen, and Liadro.
Volumes of imports from Africa are negligible for ceramic tableware, as well.

Fig. 8 Principal places of origin of ceramic tableware

[Trends in imports of leading exporters]



[Share of importers in 2010 (value basis)]



Country	2006	2007	2008	2009		2010				
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Value	Volume		Value		Average unit price
China	94,379	80,467	63,615	63,204	14,673	67,902	90.2%	16,089	61.7%	237
Thailand	2,792	2,677	2,744	1,971	1,381	1,993	2.6%	1,623	6.2%	815
Vietnam	1,427	1,119	1,154	1,062	198	909	1.2%	198	0.8%	217
U.K.	1,084	798	706	396	1,199	407	0.5%	1,187	4.6%	2,921
Germany	479	390	370	208	1,183	281	0.4%	1,090	4.2%	3,878
Other	3,722	4,130	4,144	3,414	6,047	3,751	5.0%	5,902	22.6%	1,573
Total	103,884	89,581	72,732	70,255	24,682	75,243	100.0%	26,090	100.0%	347

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)
Note: Total is not always the simple sum for each column due to rounding.

Item	First place				Second place			
	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price
Of porcelain	China	8,583	59.0%	247	Thailand	1,097	7.5%	959
Of china	China	7,505	65.1%	226	Spain	612	5.3%	10,500

Units: value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

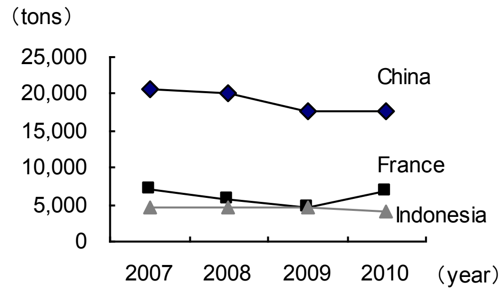
[Glass tableware]

Imports of glass tableware come largely from Asian countries such as China, Indonesia, and Thailand, and European countries such as France, Germany, and Austria. Compared to those imported from Asian countries, the glass tableware imported from European countries have higher average unit values, because of the large amounts of imports of such up-market glass tableware as those by Baccarat, Lalique, Meissen, and Liedel, among others. In fact, a large

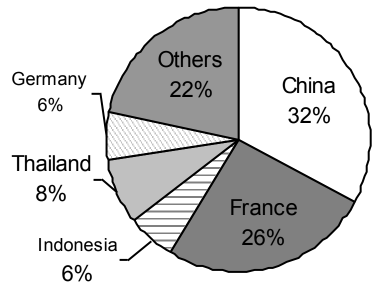
part of lead glass tableware is imported from European countries. Among them, the French fine glass brand Baccarat is especially popular in Japan, known for its strong brand power and superior design and quality.
Volumes of imports from Africa are also negligible for glass tableware.

Fig. 9 Principal places of origin of glass tableware

[Trends in imports of leading exporters]



[Share of importers in 2010 (value basis)]



Country	2006	2007	2008	2009		2010				
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Value	Volume		Value		Average unit price
China	—	20,756	20,113	17,622	5,812	17,582	43.6%	5,493	32.7%	312
France	—	7,024	5,678	4,628	3,875	6,792	16.9%	4,338	25.8%	639
Indonesia	—	4,612	4,738	4,557	1,104	4,021	10.0%	986	5.9%	245
Thailand	—	3,438	3,666	3,478	1,171	3,787	9.4%	1,370	8.2%	362
Germany	—	937	830	760	955	895	2.2%	957	5.7%	1,070
Others	—	11,344	9,924	7,820	3,735	7,212	17.9%	3,660	21.8%	507
Total	—	48,111	44,948	38,866	16,652	40,287	100.0%	16,805	100.0%	417

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)
Note 1: Total is not always the simple sum for each column due to rounding.
Note 2: Figures for 2006 and 2007 are not included in the table because of alterations to the scope of HS codes in 2007..

Item	First place				Second place			
	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price
Glass-ceramics	China	20	36.9%	338	France	15	27.4%	700
Cups, glassware (lead crystal)	France	1,949	82.6%	7,297	Germany	207	8.8%	1,918
Cups, glassware (other)	China	1,247	36.3%	332	Thailand	254	7.4%	238
Tableware, kitchenware (lead crystal)	France	87	53.4%	9,053	Germany	41	25.3%	963
Tableware, kitchenware (other)	China	1,687	31.1%	266	France	1,337	24.7%	235
Other (lead crystal)	France	478	43.4%	7,229	Austria	303	27.6%	17,898
Other (other)	China	2,471	57.8%	337	Indonesia	967	22.6%	253

Units: value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

[Metal tableware]

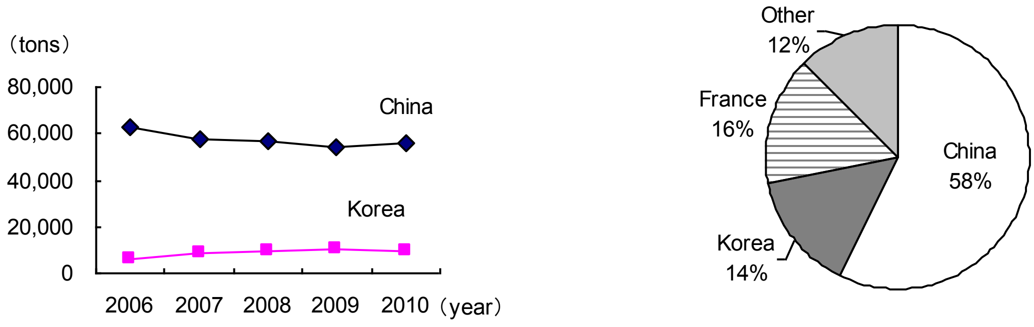
Imports of metal tableware are largely from China, Korea, and France, which together account for over 93% in quantity and about 88% by value of the imported metal tableware. Countries of origin of imports vary among different types of metal, however; while the products made using stainless steel and aluminum are largely imported from China and Korea, imports from France account for a particularly large portion for cast-iron products.

In addition, products imported from France often have high added-value with a focus on functionality and design, those from China and Korea are largely inexpensive products with a greater importance on cost-consciousness. Unit values of these imports from China and Korea are hence lower than those of French imports.

Volumes of the metal product imports from Africa are negligible.

Fig. 10 Principal places of origin of metal tableware

[Trends in imports of leading exporters] **[Share of importers in 2010 (value basis)]**



Country	2006	2007	2008	2009		2010				
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Value	Volume		Value		Average unit price
China	62,548	57,750	56,687	54,192	28,592	56,200	72.4%	29,148	57.1%	519
Korea	6,193	8,223	9,669	10,066	7,925	9,651	12.4%	7,397	14.5%	766
France	6,695	5,671	6,522	5,869	7,701	6,341	8.2%	8,133	15.9%	1,283
Other	7,896	6,885	6,835	5,471	7,793	5,401	7.0%	6,364	12.5%	1,178
Total	83,332	78,530	79,712	75,598	52,011	77,593	100.0%	51,042	100.0%	658

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)
Note: Total is not always the simple sum for each column due to rounding.

Item	First place				Second place			
	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price	Country	Value	Share	Average unit price
Tableware, kitchenware (cast iron)	France	1,374	70.5%	1,154	China	403	20.7%	277
Tableware, kitchenware (stainless steel)	China	16,178	69.3%	546	France	2,207	9.5%	1,707
Tableware, kitchenware (copper)	China	24	25.3%	1,333	Switzerland	21	22.6%	14,668
Tableware, kitchenware (aluminum)	China	12,543	48.9%	500	Korea	6,952	27.1%	756

Units: value = ¥ million, average unit price = ¥ per kg Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

(2) Import Market Share in Japan

<Ceramic or glass tableware>

The market share of imports among the ceramic tableware declined temporarily in 2008 and 2009 due partly to the global recession, while a long-term trend shows gradual increases in imports, which accounted for 39.0% of the total in 2010.

As for glass tableware, the market share of imports has been on the decline since 2007, down to 40.8% in 2010. Possible causes behind this declining market share of import products include the increasingly larger percentages of inexpensive products in the imported products, and the ongoing shifts in the production by Japanese manufacturers to products with higher unit prices.

Fig. 11 Import share in the Japanese Market (ceramic or glass tableware)

		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ceramics	Domestic production	62,526	57,381	53,116	43,319	40,750
	Imports	37,457	37,377	31,025	24,682	26,090
	Domestic market total	99,983	94,758	84,141	68,001	66,840
	Import share	37.5%	39.4%	36.9%	36.3%	39.0%
Glassware	Domestic production	29,325	29,748	28,839	24,301	24,421
	Imports	-	24,843	22,442	16,652	16,805
	Domestic market total	-	54,591	51,281	40,953	41,226
	Import share	-	45.5%	43.8%	40.7%	40.8%

Unit: ¥ million Source: Yearbook of Ceramics and Building Materials (METI), Trade Statistics (MOF)
Note: Total is not always the simple sum for each column due to rounding.

<Other tableware products>

The market share of imports in metal tableware is unknown due to the lack of official statistics that indicate the size of the domestic market for tableware and kitchenware made using metal. However, considering that Asian products are generally less expensive than Japanese products and that the volumes of imports of up-market products from France, etc., have been stable, the market share of imports is expected to increase.

With regard to plastic and wooden tableware, their market shares are also unknown, as there are a wide variety of uses for plastic tableware, and the specific volumes of household goods and daily commodities produced are not known.

(3) Changes in Volume of Imports and Backgrounds

For major product groups of plastic, wooden, ceramic, glass, and metal tableware among interior goods, the volumes of imports vary slightly among different items. Overall, however, the volumes of imports peaked out in 2007 then turned to a decrease in 2008 and 2009. These decreases in the volumes of imports may have been due to the Lehman Shock and the subsequent worldwide recession in late 2008 that resulted in slumping consumer spending in Japan. In fact, after the recession was considered to have hit bottom in 2010, the imports of interior goods increased both in quantity and by value.

In 2010, while the quantities and volumes of imports increased, import unit values dropped as they had in 2009, this was due to the rising percentages of less expensive imports and the continuously weak yen.

Meanwhile, concerning import trends for different items and countries of origin of imports, a large amount of inexpensive products were imported from China and other Asian countries, and imports of expensive products from France, Germany and other European countries also remained steady. This is considered to have been an increasingly clear reflection of selective consumption habits in which today's consumers are more consciously choosing to procure their daily necessities at the lowest cost possible, preferring not to buy goods that do not fit into their lifestyle or are unnecessary for the time being, however cheap they may be, while they do not mind spending a large amount of money on something they want or care about.

5. Domestic Distribution

(1) Trade Practice

Trading of interior goods in Japan, largely involves purchasing between manufacturers, importers, wholesalers and retailers; there is no noteworthy trading practice unique to the industry.

(2) Domestic Market Situations

<Market trends by item>

[Glass tableware]

The largest demand for glass-made tableware is single-item demand for household use. For glass tableware for daily use such as tumblers and small dishes, mass-produced items from China or ASEAN countries are available in abundance on the market, while other items, such as wine/champagne glasses and old-fashioned glassware remain a stronghold of European brands for their strong popularity and reliability.

Many of the glass tableware imported from China and ASEAN countries is soda-glass tableware and small accessories. A majority of such imports, particularly from China, are products developed by Japanese glass manufacturers and a vast variety of glass tableware in numerous colors and designs. High-end glass tableware such as crystal glass, on the other hand, is mostly handled by department stores, and only a small portion goes to interior goods shops for sale.

[Ceramic tableware]

The flatware market as a daily necessity is already saturated. In many households, there are ceramics left unused as people may have received them as a wedding favor but do not like them. For replacement demand for broken flatware, imports from Asian countries, especially China, dominate the market for their low price and practicability, bringing down product prices across the market.

In recent years, however, a steadily growing number of people wish to choose their flatware more consciously to enjoy their "food" moments at home. People usually buy products offered at interior goods shops to use at their own home or give to others as gifts, and such products are increasingly more diverse and personalized.

With the exception of some of the expensive celadon and white porcelain that have a long history in China, ceramic and porcelain flatware made in Asia and imported to Japan is mostly regarded as inexpensive and mass-produced, and Chinese products in particular have dominated the mass-produced market as of late. As with the case of glass tableware, those offered at interior goods shops are typically such mass-produced products, and high-end products are rarely offered at these shops.

[Metal tableware]

The market for metal tableware and kitchenware such as pots and pans is saturated. Although there are a large variety of products in the market, with prices ranging from as inexpensive as several hundred yen to as expensive as several tens of thousands of yen, the highest-selling are relatively inexpensive ones in the 2,000-3,000 yen range, which are largely products imported from Asia, especially China and Korea.

On the other hand, user-friendly, high-functionality products that are more expensive but have superior functionality and design have also established their presence. While high-end European and the North American brands are popular in this area, Japanese manufacturers are seeking to target consumers by offering products with a focus on quality and functionality at reasonable prices, while distancing themselves from price competition.

<Consumer needs in interior goods>

[Changes in Japanese people's lifestyles and "zakka" boom]

In Japan, residences that used to consist mainly of Japanese-style rooms have now become more Western-style room-oriented. As many people are moving into apartments in and near large cities, Japanese residences are considered to have smaller floor space compared to those in other developed countries. In terms of floor layout, while traditional layout used to be a closed layout in which the kitchen and the living room were separated, it has become popular to have a more "open" kitchen that is part of a combined "living and dining area.”

Such recent changes in Japanese people's lifestyle have had a large influence on their choice when purchasing interior goods. Where tableware and kitchenware are concerned, for instance, people place a great importance on product value as interior decoration and a "fun" factor when using it, in addition to its quality and functionality; colors and designs are becoming an important key to the sales performance of a product.

As interior goods are attracting increasing attention in Japan, a number of large and small shops specialized in interior goods have appeared. Large-size commercial establishments or shopping malls, which have been a driving force in the Japanese retail market, almost always have several interior goods shops in them. In addition, as these interior goods or interior goods shops come to make frequent appearances in such media as television and magazines, more consumers are choosing to check more than one shop and review their options in order to make sure that they buy what they like.

In today's Japan, a large number of people are also seeking to keep their rooms tidy with as few things as possible, while more residences consist mainly of Western-style rooms, and more people wish to have their rooms coordinated in a Western-style design for a more sophisticated atmosphere. These trends have brought the concept of "simple and modern" into the spotlight, and interior goods with such a "simple and modern" taste are sought after by a large number of consumers. In fact, the Swedish furniture retailer IKEA which arrived in Japan in 2006, offers a wide range of simple and modern-oriented products, and has drawn much attention as a highly popular retailer in Japan.

In addition to furniture retailers such as IKEA and Nitori, home improvement chains and other mass retailers have been increasing their lineup of interior goods with a simple and modern taste. Generally, such products are inexpensive but intricately designed. Thanks to year-on-year proliferation of hundred-yen stores focusing on low-cost products and Internet retailers, distribution channels are being diversified in the interior goods market.

[Position of market for products with exotic design]

Japan at present has high demand for "simple and modern" designs as discussed above, and some people are moving beyond "simple and modern," causing consumer needs to diversify even further. One example is the recent resurgence in popularity for traditional Japanese designs and tastes, which has then evolved into the "Japanese modern," a combination of Japanese and Western tastes.

Among such trends of today's Japanese consumers is the "ethnic" design that has gained popularity in recent years. This concept of "ethnic" refers to the exotic and unusual tastes of Southeast Asia and Africa, as compared to Western-style "sophisticated" tastes that are called "simple and modern." As household goods made in Southeast Asia are particularly common in Japan, ethnic-design household goods are also called "Asian zakka." Although the ethnic trend is merely considered a niche market, shops specialized in household goods with such ethnic tastes have been emerging, which demonstrates a steady level of popularity.

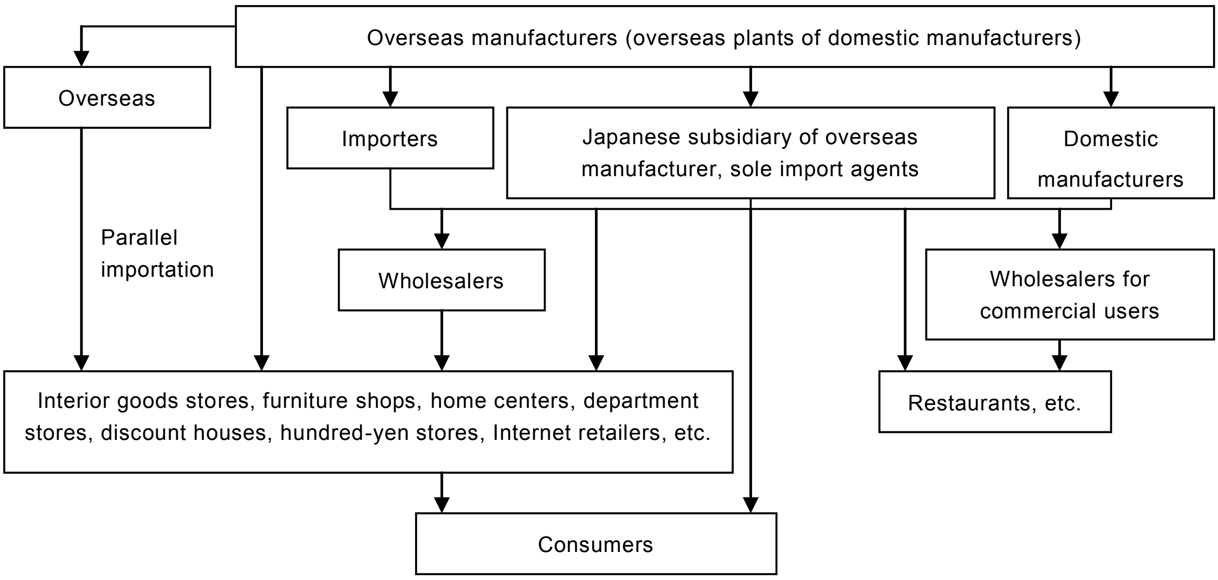
(3) Distribution Channels

Distribution channels for interior goods vary slightly among different items, although they are typically as follows:

Most interior goods manufactured overseas are imported by an importer or a Japanese subsidiary or general agent of the overseas manufacturer, then sold to wholesalers, retailers, and finally to consumers. Recently, however, direct transaction between large retailers and producers (or importers) has become more common. In addition, increasingly lower selling prices that have resulted in smaller margins, as well as the growing popularity of the Internet, have caused distribution channels to become shorter and simpler, gradually lowering the presence of wholesalers.

Becoming increasingly common among ceramic and glass tableware, high-end brand products in particular, is "parallel importation," in which products are imported not through Japanese importers but retailers in a third country, such as Singapore and Hong Kong; parallel-importation has an advantage in that products can be imported at lower cost than in the case of using a conventional distribution channel.

Fig. 12 Distribution channels for interior goods



(4) Issues and Considerations for Entering the Japanese Market and Marketing Method

Issues to consider when entering the Japanese market for interior goods vary among different items. Recent trends show consumers purchase interior goods largely by single item and for use at their own home, and combined with the increasingly diversified and advanced consumer needs, these trends mean that one should bear in mind that products that do not meet consumer needs will not be accepted, however inexpensive they may be. When entering into the market, one should make in-depth research on the needs of Japanese consumers, and ensure that products, even if mass-produced, have features that differentiate themselves from other products when placed on the store shelves. It should also be noted that the product cycle is becoming progressively shorter, with a wider variety of products manufactured in smaller volumes.

For individual product groups, fragile ceramic and glass tableware require utmost care to minimize damage in transit. In Japan, the Product Liability (PL) Act has been enacted in order to stipulate the liability for compensation of manufacturers, etc. and to protect the victim in case that it is verified that the damages to human life, body or properties have been caused due to defects in the manufactured goods. Care should be exercised as the law may apply to some metal-made tableware and kitchenware.

In Japan, many consumers wish to coordinate the design of a room so that the atmosphere and taste are consistent, and retailers that handle interior goods thus line up products under such concepts as "cute" and "natural." It is therefore important that producers who wish to enter the Japanese market, research and carefully consider which retailers should handle their product concept in Japan.

(5) Examples of Developing Countries' Products in Japan

Among interior goods manufactured in developing countries, colorful glass products made in Egypt are popular. Flower vases and 5–10-cm tall perfume bottles depicting animals and plants are imported to Japan for sale. Regarding ceramics, coffee cups and other tableware made in Morocco or Tunisia are distributed. Ceramic tableware made by Morocco-based Cocema attracts the particular interest of Japanese consumers.

In addition, a small volume of textiles produced in developing countries are also available. They include bed linens such as bedcovers and pillowcases and table linens such as tablecloth and place mats.

At present, such products made in developing countries are mostly sold at "ethnic" design household goods shops or over the Internet.

(6) Import Promotion Activities

The Tableware Festival is a trade show of all types of tableware products, with a focus on ceramics and glassware. It has a number of exhibitors from overseas, and some products on exhibition are available for sale for general consumers.

First held in July 2010, the Tableware & Dining Expo is a general trade show of Japanese and overseas tableware products. It takes place in conjunction with the International Variety-gift Expo Tokyo and the Fashion Goods & Accessories Expo.

The Gourmet & Dining Style Show, meanwhile, is an exhibition mainly for manufacturers of food and household goods; a number of companies that handle kitchenware and tableware exhibit at this event.

Other than the above, there are a number of other smaller trade shows that include interior goods.

Fig. 13 Exhibitions and other events for interior goods

Name of events	Date	Details
Tableware Festival	Annually Late January–Early February	Sponsored by Tableware Festival Executive Committee (Yomiuri Shimbun, Tokyo Dome Corporation)
Tableware & Dining Expo	Annually July	Sponsored by Reed Exhibitions Japan Ltd. First Expo was held in July 2010. Second Expo to be held in July 2011
Gourmet & Dining Style Show	Biannually Irregularly	Sponsored by Business Guide-Sha, Inc. Tenth tradeshow was held in February 2011
Tokyo International Gift Show	Biannually Around February, September	Sponsored by Gift Show Secreatriat, Business Guide-Sha, Inc. General exhibition of personalized gifts and household goods
Interior Lifestyle Tokyo	Annually June	Sponsored by Mesago Messe Frankfurt Corporation. International trade fair for the Japanese interior market
IFFT/Interior Lifestyle Living	Annually November	Cosponsored by International Development Associatiion of The Furniture Industry of Japan and Mesago Messe Frankfurt Corporation. General trade fair combining interiors and furniture

6. Related Organization

Fig. 14 Related organizations

Organization	Contact	URL
All Japan Plastic Product Industrial Federation	TEL: +81-3-3541-4321	http://www.jppf.gr.jp/
Japan Industry Union of Plastic Housewares Manufacturers	TEL: +81-3-5644-1262	http://www.jpm.or.jp/
Federation of Japan Pottery Manufacturers' Co-operative Associations	TEL: +81-52-935-7231	http://www.toujiki.org/
Japan Ceramics Society	TEL: +81-3-3292-7124	http://www.j-ceramic.jp/
Glass Manufacturers’ Association of Japan	TEL: +81-3-5937-5861	http://www.glassman.or.jp/
Japan Metal Houseware Industry Association	TEL: +81-256-61-5888	http://www.houseware.jp/
Japan Aluminum Products Association	TEL: +81-3-3583-7971	http://www.apajapan.org/APA2/framepage2.htm