Concentrate all will to Kyoto Brand

In this era of the brand, not a day passes without seeing the topic of brands in newspapers and magazines.

The administration is going to start a fully-fledged plan for building the Kyoto brand this year: extensive ripple effects in various fields such as business management, the tourism industry, and local industry are expected.

Brands are involved in various aspects of our society. Although brands can be viewed from many angles, in this report, we consider them as trademarks or “name boards” of companies.

Trademarks are largely classified into primary trademarks that express company names such as “SONY” or “TOYOTA” and secondary trademarks that denote names of products such as “VAIO” or “CROWN”. Primary trademarks include business brands such as “Panasonic” or “National” of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. We should have a clear idea of what type of brand to discuss.

The ultimate ideal for a certain brand is to become so dominant that there is no other brand to compete with. If this happens, the brand name will be socially recognized as the name representing a group of similar products. Sellotape (cellophane tape), Kurepasu or Crayon Pastel (pastel), and Decola (synthetic-resin decorative laminate) are examples. These are what professor Hidetaka Katayama, of the University of Tokyo, calls “Power Brands”.

Dream (1), consistency (2), and being innovative (3) are ranked among the most important requirements for a “Power Brand”. Mercedes-Benz and Nike satisfy all of these three requirements.

Then how about “Kyoto Brand”? Although its name recognition is relatively high, Kyoto has not reached the level of a top-rated city.

However, Kyoto has some potential background to become a “Power Brand”. Being an ancient capital for 1,200 years, the temples, shrines, and cityscape of Kyoto satisfy the requirements for a sightseeing spot. Kyoto is also the most important city for universities and high-technology companies. Its traditional crafts, including Nishijin-brocade, Kiyomizu-ware, and Kyo-yuzen as well as Machiya, Kyoto cuisine, tea ceremony, and flower arrangement are among the oldest cultural
practices in Japan.
Nevertheless, Kyoto has not yet become a “Power Brand” due to the lack of: an active message to
the world; appeal for high-tech industry groups; and advertising of its status as an academic city.
The individual activities of each company, university, and government agency will not be suffi-
ciently effective to solve these problems. It requires the unification of the hearts and the forces
of each group in Kyoto to create the “Kyoto Brand”.
Besides manufacturing led by the industrial world, there are many fields where the knowledge
and leadership of universities and government agencies are indispensable, e.g. original technolo-
gies generated through the fusion of advanced technology and traditional technology; eco-design
appropriate to the birth place of the Kyoto Protocol; and the introduction of universal design to
towns and public facilities to welcome large numbers of people.
Commercial success, which is based on products and services, is essential for brands. From this
point of view, through the industry-academic-government project, it is necessary to create prod-
ucts and services that are unique to Kyoto to lead the new era.