

News from JAMA on Motorcycles New Year's Roundtable



= Panelists =

(Clockwise from the left)

Yamaha delegate	Akira Araki	Senior Executive Officer, Product Development Operations Motorcycle Headquarters, Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd.
Honda delegate	Minoru Harada	Senior Managing and Representative Director, Chief Operating Officer for Motorcycle Operations, Honda Motor Co., Ltd.
Moderator	Yoko Togashi	Freelance journalist
Suzuki delegate	Akira Tsugihiro	Managing Executive Officer, General Manager, Domestic Motorcycle · Marine & Power Products Marketing, Suzuki Motor Corporation
Kawasaki delegate	Shinichi Tamba	Senior Vice President/ President, Consumer Products & Machinery Company, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd.

Togashi (moderator): Welcome, all of you, to our regular New Year's roundtable discussion. I'll begin by asking for comments on the performance of overseas markets last year, and conditions in Asia in particular.

Tsugihiro (Suzuki): Suzuki's Asian motorcycle business spans China, Southeast Asia and India. China is our largest market, and we operate there with one joint-venture enterprise and one technical tie-up. Next year we'll be launching a new joint venture, and are thinking in terms of supplying products built there to destinations outside China. In Southeast Asia, although a bit behind schedule, we are reorganizing our operations in Thailand and preparing for a new start in that market. In India, a new plant has started up and we expect results as of this year. Our Asia performance overall was up slightly over 2006.



Akira Tsugihiro (Suzuki)

Togashi: While Asia continues to grow, what about Europe and North America?

Harada (Honda): In the U.S., neither our motorcycles nor our all-terrain recreational vehicles (ATVs) are doing so well. In contrast, sales in Europe remain strong. But it's a mature market, so growth potential is limited. Still, we see fairly solid

demand developing there for larger models. One positive aspect is that the market there is expanding into Eastern Europe.

Tamba (Kawasaki): Although our U.S. sales are down, their decline hasn't proven commensurate with the slump in the economy. So we're determined to keep performance figures up. The European market to date was driven by Italy and Spain, but sales in those two countries have fallen off, whereas in the U.K. and Germany they've picked up. Overall, we're seeing a slight improvement in Europe. In Eastern Europe we're identifying potential for future growth.

Togashi: What are your takes on South America? The consensus is that it's the regional market with the best prospects.

Araki (Yamaha): Brazil is definitely growing, with a total market demand last year of 1.6 million units. Yamaha sold 220,000 units there in 2007, but under current conditions we are unable to supply more products even if the demand is there. We think demand in Brazil will climb to about 2.5 million units per year by 2010-11. Colombia is also performing well, and with the focus on Brazil we see South America generating robust results over the next five to six years at least

Togashi: Turning to the domestic market, last fall's Tokyo Motor Show saw manufacturers going all out to showcase their latest motorcycle products. How do you assess their approaches to issues such as safety?

Harada: In R&D targeting the ASV (Advanced Safety Vehicle), one area being pursued is vehicle-to-vehicle communication for application to both motorcycles and standard vehicles, with Honda and the other automakers all closely involved. Other important research aims at making motorcycles more conspicuous for other drivers.

Honda is very focused on advanced braking technology, with nearly all our motorcycles now featuring ABS (anti-lock brake systems) and CBS (combined brake systems). We also have our sights on installing air bags in certain models. Meanwhile, we're moving ahead in the area of environmental performance with research on hybrid motorcycles, biofuel, reducing the use of hazardous substances, and so on. A key point in all such efforts is lowering costs so as to make these and other features affordable as well as attractive.

Araki: When it comes to safety, action is being taken in some areas by the entire industry, but other areas are being pursued independently. We ourselves are focused, for example, on greater visibility for motorcycle riders by means of brighter lamps and optimum designs for them. Environmental technologies are pretty well established for fuel-cell cars and other vehicles, but there are still many technical obstacles to applying such progress to motorcycles. Challenges include size, efficiency and, ultimately, the hurdles of cost that must be overcome to reach the commercialization stage.

Tsugihira: At last year's Tokyo Motor Show, Suzuki displayed prototypes for fuel-cell vehicles and 3-dimensional cam engines. Actually, commercial production of fuel-cell cars isn't for



Minoru Harada (Honda)



Shinichi Tamba (Kawasaki)



Akira Araki (Yamaha)

right away. For 3-dimensional cam engines, in contrast, there are models that could be realized immediately by applying conventional technology. Engines of this caliber can increase fuel efficiency by about 20% with no loss of engine power.

Tamba: At Kawasaki we're also active in safety technology, advancing different approaches within our ASV plan while pursuing hybrid development and greater fuel efficiency on the energy and environmental fronts. There are areas for which commercialization is just around the corner, but the technology for hybrid models and other advances needs more time to reach the marketable stage.

Togashi: Clearly, Japan's motorcycle manufacturers are channeling extensive efforts into product development. But in order to increase the number of riders, improvements in the use environment seem vital. A case in point is the extremely high cost of tolls on expressways in Japan compared to tolls in Europe and North America. What actions are your companies taking towards improving the use environment?



Yoko Togashi (moderator)

Tsugihiro: For the past decade or more, the industry has issued annual demands to the Japanese government to reduce road tolls to more reasonable levels. Within these negotiations, however, there is a gap between the industry on the one hand, and the government and expressway administrators on the other as regards benchmark levels for computing fares. We believe that expanded application of electronic toll collection (ETC) is one key to bridging this gulf. Yet there is probably no genuinely promising option other than to continue patiently to press for toll rate reductions, while introducing other measures that could help move things in the right direction.

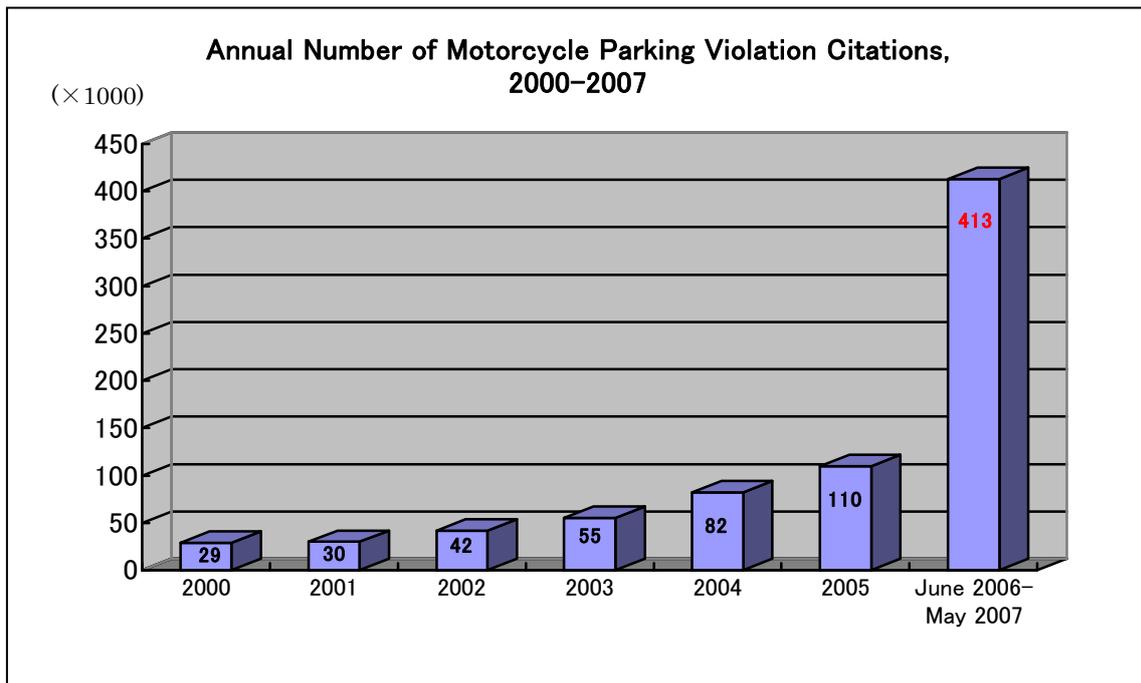
Togashi: Still looking at the use environment, expanding motorcycle parking availability seems to be a major challenge. What are your thoughts on this?

Tsugihiro: We think riders may perceive this as a recent development. The attitude of users in the past was to park motorcycles for free in just about any open space along sidewalks or elsewhere, a practice that was met with general acceptance on the part of the public. In the 1990s, however, laws were passed mandating greater pedestrian accessibility and barrier-free mobility, with Braille blocks increasingly being installed on sidewalks and other walkways.

Although this led to stricter regulations on the sidewalk parking of bicycles, motorcycles and other vehicles, only 30,000 or so citations were issued for such parking violations in 2001. In the one-year period from June 2006 to May 2007, however, that number soared to over 400,000. This increase does not so much reflect a deterioration in riders' manners as a reduced public tolerance for motorcycle parking practices. The industry needs to take this shift into account, while we also favor a broader response by the government to the problem of inadequate motorcycle parking availability.



Parking lots for motorcycles



Harada: This is especially true in urban areas, where the lack of parking availability makes motorcycle use virtually impossible. There is, therefore, an urgent need to construct parking facilities in such areas. If motorcycle manufacturers, dealers and other distribution partners and motorcycle users themselves could join forces in demanding a redress of this situation, it would represent a considerable lobbying effort. In fact, in November last year a petition drive was launched whose initial goal is to obtain several hundred thousand signatures by the end of this March.

Togashi: I certainly hope that such grassroots-level activities will pave the way not only to construction of more parking lots, but to other needed improvements in the motorcycle use environment as well. Gentlemen, my thanks to all of you for taking the time to participate in today's roundtable.

**バイクに
駐車スペースを!**

街なかには止める場所がない!
いったいどこに止めればいいのか?

わたしたちは、街なかにはバイクの駐車スペースが確保・拡充されるよう、政府に迅速な対応を求めます。

多くのライダーが困っています

1 外出先で、バイクを路上に駐車できる場所はほとんどありません。
※警察署長や自治会役員などから「公道には止めてはいけません。バイクの駐車スペースは公道に止めることはできません。」
バイクの駐車違反取扱い件数の推移(単位:千件)

年(千)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
件数	29	30	42	55	82	110	413	413

2 自動車駐車場や自転車駐車場の多くが「バイクお断り」
※警察署長の関わりが強い地域などで、バイクが駐車できるスペースがほとんどないのが現状です。

【注】日本自動車工業会 調べ NMCA日本二輪車協会 調べ
※(注) 全国警察本部から提供されたデータに基づく。 ※(注) 日本警察本部から提供されたデータに基づく。 ※(注) 日本警察本部から提供されたデータに基づく。

NMCA electric petition Web site:
www.nmca.gr.jp/voice/signature_200710.php