

Fastener World 2024 Osaka Tour Report



Where It Began:

Taiwanese Fastener Quality Gains Attention from a Renowned Japanese Trader

The fastener industry in Taiwan has a history of 75 years, overcoming economic depressions, the U.S.-China trade war, the pandemic, and it is still resilient. Known for high quality and competitive pricing, Taiwanese fasteners have attracted global buyers. In recent years, Taiwan has garnered significant international support, with many countries recognizing "Made in Taiwan" as a key driver for global manufacturing development and acknowledging Taiwan's critical role in international trade. Taiwanese fastener industry holds an unassailable position in the global market regarding production volume, performance, quality, service, and its unique supply chain integrity and stability.

From there, Sunco Industries— one of Japan's leading fastener traders— has recognized these characteristics of Taiwanese fastener industry and recently decided to make a significant shift in its purchasing strategy by greatly expanding collaboration with Taiwanese suppliers. It is currently shifting from a domestic-focused trader to an international trader. In addition to exporting JIS and metric screws globally, it is diversifying procurement sources. A crucial step in this process is strengthening partnerships with Taiwanese suppliers, with Fastener World being the first choice due to its strong influence in Taiwanese fastener industry.

Fastener World is committed to "deepening local engagement to showcase Taiwanese fasteners to the world." Over the years, we have tirelessly worked to help Taiwanese manufacturers enter the Japanese market, introducing the quality of Taiwanese fasteners to Japan as well as excellent Japanese manufacturers to Taiwan via our publications. This effort has now reached a significant milestone— **Fastener World and Sunco Industries jointly arranged a tour for Taiwanese suppliers to Osaka from November 18 to 21. We wanted to showcase Taiwan to Japan and enable Taiwanese fastener manufacturers to enter Japan's logistics supply chain. The first stop of this tour was Sunco Industries' headquarters, where a product exhibition by Taiwanese suppliers (the tour members) was arranged and held, allowing them to engage in face-to-face discussions with Sunco Industries' purchasing specialists. The second stop was an automated large-scale logistics center and a warehouse located in Higashi-Osaka, where they learned about Sunco Industries' unique logistics technology. The third stop was two local factories in Osaka, allowing them to learn about the management philosophy behind "Japanese Manufacturing".**

We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Yoshihide Okuyama, President of Sunco Industries, as well as all the Sunco Industries' executives and staff who have engaged with us throughout this process for providing their space as the exhibition venue to help Taiwanese suppliers enter the Japanese market. We'd also like to extend special thanks to Isshin Industries and Fuji Seisakusho for accommodating and allowing the members to visit their factories in Osaka. The members were able to experience the spirit of Japanese craftsmanship and gain valuable insights. This article will provide readers with an exciting recap of this tour and aims to encourage further collaboration between Taiwan and Japan in the fastener industry.



First Stop:

Sunco Industries Headquarters Tour + Taiwanese Suppliers' Product Exhibition



After inviting Fastener World to visit Sunco Industries' headquarters in 2023, in 2024 Sunco Industries opened its doors to the 30-people tour members. The members watched an introductory presentation by Sunco Industries and engaged in a Q&A session where many questions were posed to senior executives (Figure 1). Some members asked about the potential of high-end fasteners such as solar screws and high-strength fasteners in the Japanese market. Sunco Industries expressed strong interest in purchasing such fasteners and said that it also purchases fasteners used in construction, automotive, electronics, and other sectors. The members also asked about Sunco Industries' purchase requirements. Sunco Industries said suppliers with JIS, ISO and/or IATF certifications are particularly attractive. Additionally, Sunco Industries sought feedback from the members regarding their impressions of the Japanese market and their participation in major manufacturing exhibitions in Japan, and was able to gain insights into the needs of Taiwanese manufacturers. The interaction was very amicable.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Next, Sunco Industries guided the members on a tour of various areas within the headquarters, including the purchasing department, sales department, electroplated product display area (Figure 2), catalog showroom, quality inspection area, shelves area, automated packaging area, Wall of Honor for outstanding employees (Figure 3), Sunco Industries' history wall (Figure 4), and the employee fitness room.



Figure 5. Sunco Industries sponsored the global champion boxer Mr. Junto Nakatani

▼ Figure 6. The exhibitors



JOKER INDUSTRIAL



KWANTEX RESEARCH



SCREWTECH INDUSTRY



JAU YEOU



FASTENER WORLD



CHIREK FASTENER



BEST QUALITY WIRE



SHEN CHOU



▼ Figure 6. The exhibitors



Figure 10



Figure 11

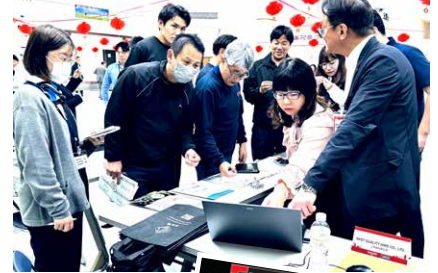


Figure 12. Sunco Industries' mascot "Socket Boys" welcome the Taiwanese exhibitors



Figure 7. Poster by Sunco Industries

Next, Sunco Industries hosted an industry-first exhibition in the main lobby of its headquarters in collaboration with Fastener World. Taiwanese exhibitors (aka. the four members) (Figure 6) were **Joker Industrial, Kwantex Research, Screwtech Industry, Jau Yeou Industry, Shen Chou Fasteners Industrial, Chirek Fastener, Best Quality Wire, Dmscrew Hardware Products, Fu Kai Fastener Enterprise, Charng Jih Enterprise, Taiwan Shan Yin International, Fastnet Corp., Chao Hsing Hardware, Dexin Precision Fixture, Standing Industrial, and Fastener World.** Sunco Industries said it placed great importance on the members who traveled all the way from Taiwan to Japan. The venue was thoughtfully decorated with festive red paper lanterns to reflect Taiwanese culture, and Sunco Industries even made a promotional poster (Figure 7) to invite its employees to the event. A total of 200 employees from both the Osaka headquarters and the Tokyo branch attended the exhibition. Sunco Industries' attendees were meticulously organized into four core groups of about ten people each. Each group engaged in in-depth discussions with every exhibitor at their tables. Meanwhile, other employees had the freedom to move around and visit various booths to learn from Taiwanese peers or discuss purchase of specific products. This arrangement was to ensure that all attendees had a chance to interact with the exhibitors (Figures 8-12).

In Fastener World's observations, before the exhibition concluded, several senior executives from Sunco Industries expressed strong interest in purchasing from exhibitors of high-quality fasteners that have significant sales potential in the Japanese and European markets. These fasteners included ultra-high-strength solar screws, extra-long roofing screws, high-strength corrosion-resistant screws, and precision micro screws. Additionally, a Sunco Industries executive was particularly impressed by a Taiwanese exhibitor's ability to design anchor bolts that match or even exceed the performance of those produced by major European and American manufacturers. Furthermore, a Sunco Industries employee mentioned a plan to visit several of these exhibitors' factories in Taiwan next year together with purchasing officers. New Sunco Industries employees attending this event also expressed their admiration for the quality and craftsmanship of Taiwanese manufacturers, which opened their eyes to new possibilities. The first stop of the tour ended on a high note!



Second Stop:

Sunco Industries Logistics Center & Warehouse Tour

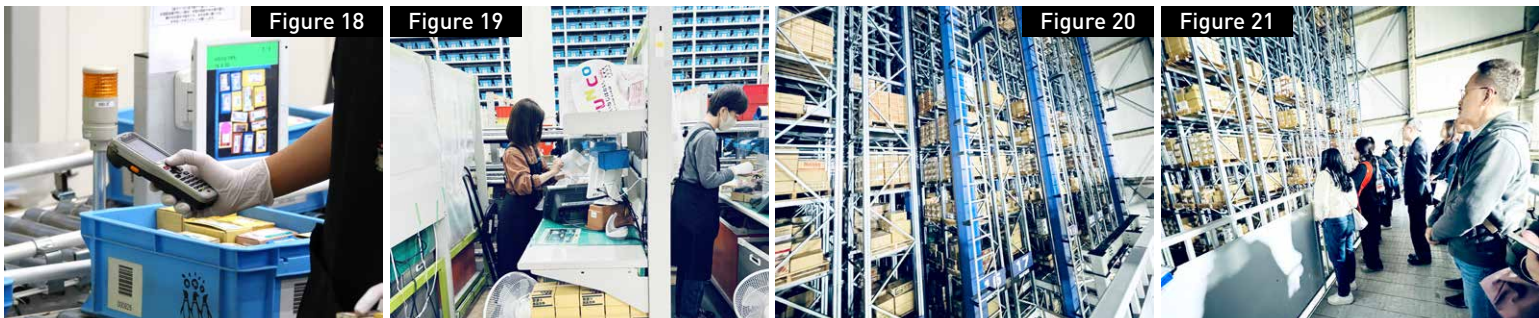
Located in Higashi-Osaka, Sunco Industries' large high-tech fastener logistics center boasts an inventory up to 2 million items, covering a wide range of fasteners from those used in aircraft to those for eyeglasses, capable of shipping globally. Sunco Industries employs 800 employees and achieves an annual revenue of JPY 40 billion. After a presentation on its logistics technology in the briefing room (Figure 13), a tour of the logistics center began. **One of the highlights of the center was the industry-leading automated rotary rack (Figures 14-16).** Sunco Industries explained that this technology eliminates the need to use carts and small boxes for manual picking, thereby increasing operational speed by 2.5 times, reducing work hours and labor costs, boosting order volumes, and even preventing products from falling during big earthquakes.



The second highlight was "automated product matching" and "optimized packaging space". Through barcode management (Figures 17-18), information of customers' ordered products is displayed on screens to help reduce packaging errors. An operator gave a demonstration on-site scanning the barcode on a packaging box. The screen then displayed prompts indicating whether the packaging was "correct" or had an "error". This way, responsible operators of each section on the conveyor line can prevent and correct any packaging mistakes at any stage via this mechanism. It ensures that even new staff can avoid man-made errors. Additionally, Sunco Industries assigns weighted points to each product based on its storage location within the logistics center. The system calculates these points to automatically match products, maximizing the use of packaging box space and facilitating fast shipping.

The third highlight was a service called "BARA" which translates to ultimate minimal unit of bulk ordering. To be exact, regardless of how many fasteners a customer orders, even if it's just one piece (minimal unit) of screw, it can be packaged and shipped globally (Figure 19). A tour member told Fastener World that it's rare to find companies in the fastener logistics field which can ship worldwide in the unit of "one piece", that it is a one-of-a-kind logistics capability. The member was impressed by Sunco Industries' highly delicate and detail-focused service offerings.

Next, the tour members moved from the logistics center to an automated packaging warehouse near Nagata Station (in Higashi-Osaka), where they observed shelves loaded with various cartons from the second floor. This warehouse is equipped with high-speed overhead cranes that can quickly handle product storage and unloading. The sheer size of the shelves, in terms of length, width, or depth, captivated the members for quite some time (Figures 20-22).



Third Stop:

Isshin Industries



A long-time supplier for Sunco Industries, **Isshin Industries Co., Ltd** (in Yao City) was founded in 1976 and now employs 58 people, primarily supplying precision machined parts, including fasteners, for agricultural machinery, medical instruments, and precision machinery. It also offers processing services for all types of metals, accommodating various materials such as black iron, stainless steel, aluminum, and steel. It can cater to urgent orders and small batch production, allowing customers to order even a single piece of metal part.

Figure 30



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25. Fastener World (right) presented a trophy to President Inada (left)

Figure 26



The tour members were first given a presentation led by Mr. Takamitsu Inada, the president of Isshin Industries (Figure 23). **A production operator of Isshin Industries mentioned that one of their strong technical capabilities is keeping a metal part steady from wobbling while machining one of its ends, thereby providing the highest quality precision processing for customers.** Their proud products were displayed on tables for the tour members to glance (Figure 24). When a member inquired about their production methods, the operator explained that they primarily manufacture as per customized orders and drawings. To thank President Inada for welcoming the tour members, Fastener World presented him with a specially made appreciation trophy (Figure 25). Following this, the members toured Mr. Inada's factory as well as various automated machines such as high precision cutting machines and milling machines (Figures 26-27). The production operator demonstrated the manufacturing process (Figure 28) and showed the members the quality inspection area (Figure 29). A member told Fastener World about the strong impression of Japan's great manufacturing technology, particularly in product design capabilities and high precision, a worthy example for Taiwanese suppliers to learn from. As the tour concluded (Figure 30), President Inada and key managers as well as all the staff walked outside and personally saw off and waved goodbye with the tour members on their bus.

Figure 27



Figure 28



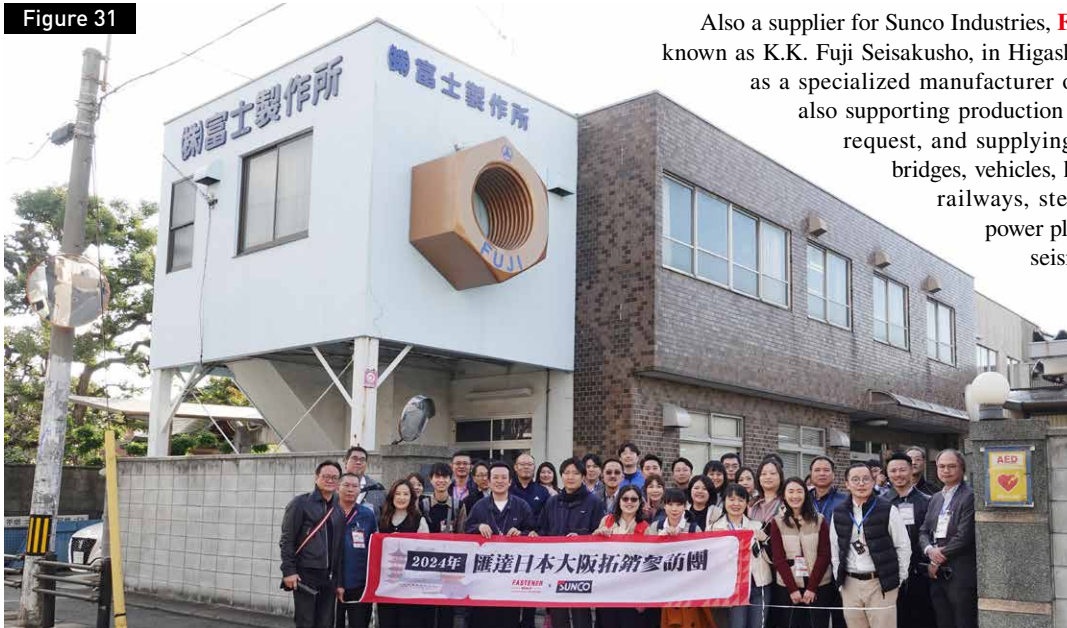
Figure 29



Fuji Seisakusho



Figure 31



Also a supplier for Sunco Industries, **Fuji Seisakusho Co., Ltd.** (also known as K.K. Fuji Seisakusho, in Higashi-Osaka) was founded in 1943 as a specialized manufacturer of special nuts (M6 to M150), also supporting production for a single piece of nut upon request, and supplying various industries including bridges, vehicles, heavy machinery, shipbuilding, railways, steel towers, highways, nuclear power plants, transportation equipment, seismic isolation devices for high-rise buildings, construction, civil engineering, machinery, and precision instruments. They offer a range of proprietary nut products, including intermediate insert nuts, anti-loosening nuts, and ultra-high nuts designed for seismic isolation devices in tall buildings.

Figure 32



Figure 33. Fuji Seisakusho's gauge rack and color coding

Figure 34



Just so that everyone recognizes Fuji Seisakusho as an expert in nuts, the company installed an oversized nut model at the entrance for the tour members to take group photos (Figure 32). During the factory tour, **the company's operator emphasized their adoption of "bottom-up" Japanese 5S management (Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain)**. Since business owners generally cannot oversee every detail in a factory, it requires employees to proactively identify, propose, and improve issues. For example, the employees organized a uniform bicycle parking area to enhance the flow of movement in the compact factory space. The molds used for production equipment (Figure 33) are categorized on shelves with codes and color markings so that employees can easily retrieve the correct mold without needing to ask others. As gauges used for quality inspection (Figures 34-35) are with different expiration dates, the employees thought of using colored rings to indicate the expiration dates and organize them on shelves. This allows the employees to refer to a chart when selecting or replacing gauges. The operator noted that their factory used to be messy and dirty, with waste oil accumulating on the floor. After implementing 5S practices, everything is now clean and orderly. This 5S system was developed collaboratively by the employees rather than imposed top-down, resulting in greater execution efficiency (Figure 36). A tour member told Fastener World that the color coding for gauge expiration dates was great to learn from and was amazed by the clean Japanese factories, admiring Fuji Seisakusho's commitment to 5S practices. As a token of gratitude, Fastener World presented an appreciation trophy to Mr. Tomoya Uemoto, the head of sales department (Figure 38).



Figure 35. The wall displays Fuji Seisakusho's 5S slogan: "Decide on what to commit to, and commit to what is decided"



Figure 36. Assorted special nuts on display



Figure 37. Fastener World (left) presented a trophy to Mr. Tomoya Uemoto (right)



Sunco Industries-hosted Dinner

On the evening of the headquarters tour (first stop), Sunco Industries hosted a dinner at the luxurious five-star Hotel New Otani Osaka to thank the tour members, which offers a stunning view of Osaka Castle at night. Five large tables were booked for this dinner. Thoughtfully, Sunco Industries arranged the seating to include at least one manager or director at each table, and at least one interpreter for every table to ensure that the tour members could communicate their thoughts and needs at any time.

The dinner was kicked off by remarks from Mr. Hiroshi Anekawa, the head of procurement department. As a token of his sincerity, he spoke in Chinese which he had practiced for a long time: "I am very grateful for you traveling this far to meet us. I hope to build a strong partnership with all of you, and I invite you to enjoy the exquisite dishes and fine wines that Sunco Industries has prepared." His speech received enthusiastic applause from everyone present.

Next, William Liao, the general manager of Fastener World, was invited to speak: "I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Mr. Anekawa and your company for the support and invitation, allowing us Taiwanese fastener manufacturers to visit here and see Sunco Industries which has one of Japan's largest scales and most efficiency in logistics. This experience is truly valuable for us to learn from. Sunco Industries is a company with a long history and excellent reputation, consistently achieving around JPY 40 billion in revenue each year. Coming here, I believe that all the tour members are anticipated to successfully enter the Japanese market through collaboration with Sunco Industries and we all look forward to jointly exploring other global markets in the future. Finally, on behalf of the tour members, I would like to express our gratitude once again and wish Sunco Industries continued success in achieving new heights in revenue every year, as well as good health and all the best to Mr. Anekawa and all employees of Sunco Industries." To commemorate this event, William Liao personally presented an appreciation trophy to Mr. Anekawa (Figure 38).

Before the dinner concluded, Mr. Hironobu Kawaguchi, the purchasing department section 3 manager, invited the tour members from each table for a group photo with Osaka Castle illuminated in the background (Figure 39). Finally, Ms. Miki Hiraoka, the purchasing department manager (Figure 40), invited the members to experience a unique Japanese custom by clapping hands rhythmically in celebration of the successful conclusion of the dinner and offered her best wishes for their safe return home.



Figure 38. William Liao (left) presented a trophy to Mr. Anekawa



Figure 40. Miki Hiraoka, the purchasing department manager



Figure 39. Group photos of members from each table



Fastener World-hosted Dinner

On the evening of the third stop, Fastener World hosted a dinner for the tour members at the Tenno-den restaurant with a view of traditional Japanese garden (Figures 41-42). This site was previously used for the G20 Osaka Summit banquet in 2019, where it welcomed Japan's Digital Minister Taro Kono and various international dignitaries. Enjoying local Japanese cuisine, the members celebrated the success of the tour. Mr. Jacky Yeh, General Manager of Dmscrew Hardware Products, treated all the members to sea urchins. At the end of the dinner, the members invited the restaurant's staff dressed in traditional Japanese kimonos to join for a group photo to commemorate the occasion (Figure 43). ■



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43

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